THE COMMONWEAL

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts, and Public Affairs.

Volume V | New York, Wednesday, February 9, 1927 | Number 14

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THE NEW IMMORALISM

ONE hopes that Professor John Erskine was misquoted in a recent report averring he had assured a New York audience that a moralist is unable to distinguish an indecent play from a decent one, and fundamentally incapable of introducing such changes as make for ethical health. It may, of course, be true that the Professor is likely to say almost anything; but if the remark outlined above leads to any conclusion it is this rather absurd one: Only the immoral (or at best those covered by that happy term, the "unmoral,") are capable of detecting decency or of bringing it into existence. Perhaps the inference is properly that whenever old-fashioned citizens behold Professor Erskine's examiners of decency enjoying themselves immensely, they will understand the reason and be governed accordingly. But in all truth it should have been apparent to any academic soul that a moralist of the stature of Shakespeare altered an older and coarser play into the fairly commendable affair known as Romeo and Juliet. It might have been borne in mind that on the whole the moral personages of the eighteenth century were reasonably successful in transforming the gayer shades of Restoration fun into a respectable hue which has remained popular ever since.

This detail from fairly recent news is stressed here only because it happens to be so characteristic of a certain attitude toward ethical standards. The measurement of right and wrong (even in the domain of public conduct) according to objective standards by men who consider these of importance, is voted a flagrant impertinence. That there should be some question of the propriety of moral verdicts about art or literature is relatively understandable. The creator of beauty follows laws which are essentially different from the commandments governing conduct. Technically he is dedicated to the perfection of line and rhythm; and his inspiration is so much a matter of insight into reality that it cannot well be curbed to suit the purposes of the moralist. But these old truths, recognized and professed by monastic teachers who discerned quite clearly the problems of building and writing in their own day, cannot be twisted to suit an extravagant individualistic indifference to the public health. The permanent test of common sense will force anyone to admit that at least some things promulgated in the name of art must be hidden or destroyed if the community is to prosper. In other words, there is an anti-social test which creative individualism must pass if it wishes to live. Thereby, and immediately, the problem of censorship is created.

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The limitations of this problem are very clearly marked. What can censorship do, and how must it assume its task? In practice, these questions are so complex that it is safe to say no adequate solution has been found for them. Nevertheless, it is well that public opinion should establish theoretical standards and align itself according to them as satisfactorily as possible. In so far as Catholic opinion is concerned, this has been done by the age-old Index—a method for the moral surveillance of literature which, though it has never been universally effective, is perfectly right in principle and at least relatively valuable in practice. Its value will be appreciated if it is compared with the expedients adopted by sporadic outbursts of ethical indignation in the world at large. The Puritan simply barred all fiction and drama; certain other groups have even gone so far as to ban all literature. In short, these sporadic attempts to deal with a real civic problem have been characterized by a complete loss of the faculty to distinguish, to judge, to apply a general philosophic rule to an individual case.

That is precisely why the thing we venture to call the "new immoralism" is so truly dangerous. On behalf of varied cults of beauty and freedom, it refuses to recognize the existence of moral principle. It magnifies a perfectly legitimate concept of art to an extent which obliterates other equally genuine and necessary concepts. And thereby it paves the way for a reaction quite as blind and undiscerning as itself. During many years we have been professing the conviction that broadax battling between capital and labor was merely destructive of both; that coöperation between the two must be established; and that out of this coöperation the welfare of both would come. If this is sensible talk about economics, why would not something like it be sensible talk about aesthetics? The "new immoralism" is the logical extremist retort to ethics, but in its turn it is about as dependable a rallying cry for an army of new Jeremy Colliers and Carrie Nations as could well be imagined. How odd it seems occasionally that the "golden mean" is the least original and the most unique of the mental habits of mankind!

To forestall the inevitable conflict between intransigeant points of view is the task of genuine ethical philosophy in all generations. If this work has been less successfully accomplished in the United States than anywhere else, it is probably the result of lack of preparation for the life of art on the one hand, and of narrowly concentrated moral inheritances on the other. The solution of the liquor problem sponsored by the Eighteenth Amendment is just one instance of a national tendency to wipe out all intermediate points of view. There are many other public examples: the decision to avoid all international complications by simply not being international at all; the application of the Nordic rule to the problems of immigration; the emergence of a definite and widely criticized national type quite antipathetic to the artistic mind. The room that should normally be set apart by society for "the free play of choice" is here forever being restricted to a narrow strip of drill-ground, the order governing which is a perennial "squad right."

Under such conditions it is, perhaps, inevitable that the creative, artistic consciousness should spurn existing ethical dictatorships. Morality needs to learn the gentle arts of persuasion. In a very interesting book, M. Victor Giraud comments understandingly upon a mistake made by Bossuet, the great theologian of the seventeenth century: "By the prestige of his genius, his eloquence and his authority, Bossuet made men believe that his peremptory intransigeance was the perfect expression of the orthodox mind; and when he died there were none to continue his work excepting camp-followers devoid of notable gifts, so that the field was at the disposal of his adversaries." The vices of one generation are fostered by the graceless virtues of another; and the too stern righteousness of a father is sometimes visited upon the heads of his children. Therefore the effort to preserve the balance, to make prevalent a nice adjustment of values, is perennially necessary.

Nothing is more widely lamented by those who are familiar with social history than the passing of that old serenity of temper which once seemed identified with Christendom. The tangled, twisted, exaggerated visions of the present are judged properly when one compares them with the smile of Chartres or—on a much lower plane—the perceptive humor of the Chaucerian books. Though one cannot regard with indifference the excesses of those who know no law or the niggardliness of those for whom one letter of the rule is everything, it remains salutary to weigh all with reasoned constructive charity so that the error of too violent effort may be circumflected to its proper goal. If this is true of general public practice, whether political or social, it is even more correct in the world of art and letters. The problem of moral health in the creative personality must remain a matter of general concern. Dicta of safety—what is meant by censorship—need to be established and respected. But the point that more can be accomplished by honoring the man who is healthy than by pummeling him who has succumbed to disease is always most important. When we do combine to celebrate the triumphs of virtue, we shall find that the little successes of grossness have faded away. In the jubilant acclaim of what is good and honorable lies the supreme antidote to the new immoralism. Then, too, the fact that this disdainful attitude toward ethics should seem novel is merely another symptom of continuing American provincialism. If we were familiar with the history of our European ancestors, whose blood in us stirs to the same old loyalties and rebellions, we should know that the days of sophistry and prurient humanism are immemorial. The present debate is therefore not startling. The dossier for both sides could be copied from forgotten books.

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Published weekly and copyrighted 1927, in the United States by the Calvert Publishing Corporation, Grand Central Terminal, New York, N. Y.

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United States: $5.00 — Foreign: $6.00

Canada: 5.50 — Single Copies: .10

WEEK BY WEEK

THE case of Mexico versus American public opinion continues. In the face of notable and constant restatements of the Catholic position—which is emphatically opposed to intervention, but firmly in favor of enlightenment—the efforts of certain publicists to cloud the situation with picturesque and shadowy inferences must gradually collapse. It is curious to observe how steadily the Calles régime is becoming a kind of topsy-turvy version of Fascismo. Orders to confiscate ecclesiastical property have been followed by a still more drastic mandate summoning all priests to report at stated times. Finally, if we are to credit a recent despatch, every foreign critic of the government is to be deported. Even a verbal comment upon the way in which things are going is likely to shorten a foreign visitor's stay in the country by a considerable number of days. We suggest to the editors of the New York World, whose columns have been burdened of late with accounts of Mussolini in action, that the Mexican version of dictatorship is at once more interesting and easier to know something about.

NATURALLY, it cannot escape notice that the purpose of the Mexican dictatorship is not economic stability or improvement. The internal financial situation of the country has steadily grown worse, despite the fact that the government has fortified itself with various expropriated ecclesiastical properties. Mexican currency and obligations have a lower value than at any time during the past seventy years. The state of commerce, influenced to a very considerable extent by the religious boycott, is chaotic and unstable. None of the problems of agriculture, of building or road-making, has been solved; and indeed, even the labor element is reported by well-informed observers to be restless and dissatisfied. The martial régime which controls the country has, therefore, no recommendation of the sort which is so easily offered for Fascismo. It exists as a corollary of social and revolutionary factors bent upon the private aggrandizement of a few, and upon establishing the supremacy of a definite doctrine. Perhaps the United States government may succeed in arbitrating its difference with the rulers of Mexico; but the mere mention of the word "arbitration" ought to mislead no one into thinking that any grave problems have already been settled, or that the Calles government will unquestionably accept the verdict.

WHETHER or not the German people uphold the new Marx cabinet, the events which led to its formation are in themselves most interesting. The stability of the Von Hindenburg government depended upon the ability of the Nationalists, who were committed to a conservative program and to a definite control of the military forces, to form a government. After considerable hesitation, the Centre party decided to lend its aid. Obviously this implies a departure from the attitude which prevailed during the last presidential campaign, when Chancellor Marx sought the support of the Left vote to defeat Von Hindenburg. During recent months, the Centrists have been struggling with the extremely difficult task of trying to agree upon a party tendency. The present parliamentary system in Germany had made it quite apparent that the older idea of a "balance of power"—as held by Windhorst and his followers—was no longer tenable. It was necessary to decide which of the two dominant tendencies, one to the Left, and the other to the Right, was to be favored. Within the ranks of the party, earnest efforts began to be made on behalf of an outspoken declaration of republicanism and social reform. Of these efforts, Dr. Wirth became the outstanding champion, but there were many who could not follow him. For a time certain anxious observers predicted the disruption of the Centrum.

AT PRESENT, it would seem that Dr. Marx is striving not so much to swing the Catholic strength to the defense of conservatism, as to unify it by showing its independence. Dr. Wirth had too closely identified it with the Left; Dr. Marx would prove its aloofness by associating it for the time being with the Right. Whether or not these tactics will succeed is a matter of the future. But there is no doubt that the Centrists are face to face with a real crisis inside their own ranks—a crisis which weakens their influence in the government. Some believe that the trouble lies in the fact that no definite program was agreed upon after the war—that the Centrist leaders formulated a purely

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opportunistic policy instead of drawing up a vigorous set of principles. But it is always so easy to theorize apart from the field of practical politics that one is inclined to believe that the best possible stand was taken, all circumstances considered, and that the present difficulties are due to far-reaching political and social changes rather than to faults of leadership.

CONDITIONS in China continue to be matter for grave concern and the exercise of patience. The action of Great Britain in making (for the benefit of both factions of the Chinese) a spectacular gesture of renunciation of special privileges acquired by force, does little to compose the existing complications. It simply reveals a new aspect of English commercial policy which is largely responsible for the chaotic conditions which now baffle and menace. When Sir Austen Chamberlain, the Foreign Minister, declares: "All we want is to keep our shops open and to be on good terms with our customers," and when David Lloyd George, the former Prime Minister, asserts that every concession must be made "because, if the Chinese got the idea that the other nations were their friends and Great Britain their enemy, the other nations would capture the Chinese trade," they contribute nothing to the solution of an intricate problem. In their anxiety to see that not a penny is lost to the till of the "nation of shopkeepers," they are willing to make an unilateral agreement—which is quite natural, since their sole concern is with the interests, solely material, of the party which is always the party of the first part to Great Britain. But their very eagerness may defeat a selfish purpose which has no real desire to bring stability and self-respect to China. The belated conversion will not be convincing to the followers of Chiang, nor to the adherents of Chang Tso Lin.

THE policy of the United States in straining patience to the limit in giving the Chinese every opportunity to establish a stable government, with which an agreement can be made which shall not be one-sided, while at the same time making provision for the protection of its nationals in case of extreme emergency, is likely to be more readily appreciated by each of the factions now at war. It is not the easiest way, because the greatest danger of the present situation does not lie in what may be done by either of the forces in the field, but lurks latent in the unorganized hordes encouraged to revenge and rapine by the evil spirit of civil war. Meanwhile, it is with pride that Americans at home hear of the action of Americans in Shanghai in doing all in their power to remove every excuse for mob violence. When the British residents there had made plans for a parade of the volunteer corps through the main streets, strong representations by the members of the American colony resulted in the substitution for this provocative display of a review of the volunteers at the race-club enclosure to which the Chinese public was not admitted.

THE report of the Quebec Liquor Commission for the fifth year of its existence, is interesting in many ways. For example, at a time when in this country the cost of endeavoring to enforce prohibition mounts steadily as "under-cover men" and agents-provocateurs have to set up distilleries and conduct bootlegging agencies to entice the unwary to the breaking of the law, it causes one to think furiously when it is announced that a single province has been enriched by $5,500,000 in one year by the operation of a real temperance agency. Also that in the same period, the Dominion government has benefited to the extent of $347,332 in customs, excise, and sales taxes. But there is another feature of this report which should not escape attention. Those who resist the slightest modification of the Volstead Act are strong in their assertion that it is nonsense to talk of permitting the sale of beer and light wines under proper regulation, because it is not beer, and above all not wine, that the moderate drinker desires; his demand, they assert, is for ardent spirits. Yet in the province of Quebec, last year, where the sale of beer and wine is in direct competition with the sale of spirits, the most marked increase in sales was of wines. The consumption of wine represented—after five years in which spirits were just as easily obtainable—an increase in the twelve months of 168,369 gallons over the total for the preceding year.

OF COURSE, these are facts which the professional prohibitionist not only will not face, but which he does everything in his power to hide. He loves to work in secret, and it irks him when men like Senator Reed force him and his methods into the open. He is out there now, disclosed as the rum-runner, the rum-seller, and the rum-distiller operating under the motto that the end justifies the means. He stands convicted of applauding the use of government money, voted for the express purpose of enforcing a law, by government agents to break the law and to entice as many others as possible to do the same. He is not a pleasant spectacle; yet it is well that his fellow-citizens should see him as he is. From now on, they are going to see more of him; see him until he is recognized as an eyesore that has to be removed.

THE appearance of Mr. McAdoo upon the pre-presidential platform was not so terrifying as had been expected. He said pretty nearly what he was expected to say; he impressed those whom he was expected to impress. Evidently the former Secretary, in selecting the Eighteenth Amendment for a theme and varying it with trumpet obligatos, acted upon the belief that conditions in 1927 are similar to those which prevailed at the time of the last Democratic convention. And they simply are not. While Governor Smith as a candidate for the White House has been viewed and considered by many people, the general attitude toward Mr. McAdoo has undergone a transformation. To

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the majority of Democrats, and indeed to the body politic generally, he looks like an uncommonly satisfactory candidate for private citizenship. Moreover, even if the prohibition issue will come to the fore with Governor Smith, he cannot be identified with that issue. He can stand on any one of several other attractive platform planks—popularity, efficient government, sound industrial policies. He has declared, in unison with Mr. McAdoo, that law as law must be enforced. But when the former Secretary was misguided by his moral and political enthusiasms into advocating the despatch of federal troops into local and state territories for the triumph of Volsteadism, he came out for a policy which directly antagonizes the "state-rights" party he was addressing, and must conflict especially with that party's "solid South." In short, if Mr. McAdoo's method of enforcement is the only possible one, then the Democrats simply cannot, as a matter of principle, enforce it. But perhaps he is out to organize something like a new Prohibition party—to which one may wish success, even while observing that if the nature of the opinions expressed in the wave of the McAdoo offensive is significant, it is not likely to be a very popular institution.

THE inevitable and exasperating plaster-casts, gaudy and offensively insincere, which emanate from the upper reaches of Third Avenue, New York, or South Chicago, lead many to believe that the nobility of ecclesiastical art—that which the old Latin word "decor" so well described—has entirely disappeared from modern life. We neglect far too easily a consideration of various contemporary art movements which have dedicated to the subject of religious painting and sculpture a fine creative energy, genuine faith, and remarkable tact. One of these movements is now brought to the especial attention of Americans through the coming of the Archabbot of Beuron, the famous German Benedictine abbey. He proposes to interest as many people as possible during the course of a brief stay, in the work that has been accomplished by monastic artists. Examples of Beuron paintings and plastic creations were placed on view in the Anderson Galleries, New York City, throughout the week following February 5. The Archabbot also proposes to give a number of illustrated lectures, and later to visit several other cities. Although he hopes to induce people to purchase Beuron reproductions, he insists most earnestly that the object of his coming is not to instigate an "art quarrel" or to engage in commercial competition with any firms now interested in disbursing religious art products. It may suffice to say, therefore, that Beuron art (which, we believe, has been recommended to Americans only by the veteran editor, Father Hudson, of Notre Dame) is at once traditional and modern in character; that its chief note is liturgical life and doctrine; and that its greatest accomplishments are to be seen in the frescoes of Monte Cassino, Beuron, and Prague. We hope to be able to say more about it in a forthcoming issue of The Commonweal. The value of what the Archabbot is representing, no less than the charm of his own personality, is sure to gain the attention of a wide audience.

THE judgment handed down by the Supreme Court of the state of Tennessee in the late Scopes case, has several points of interest for us. The majority upheld the constitutionality of the anti-evolution law, but quashed the verdict on the technical point that a larger fine was inflicted than the constitution permitted. That error could only be corrected by a retrial which the judges deprecated, suggesting to the Attorney-General that he enter a nolle prosequi. Judge McKinley dissented from the judgment, believing that the statute was invalid "for uncertainty of meaning." The most interesting feature, however, was the statement put in by Judge Chambliss, who, though agreeing with two of his brethren on the constitutionality of the law, differed from them in its interpretation—a fact which seems to lend aid to Judge McKinley's view. In the opinion of Judge Chambliss, it was only the teaching of materialistic evolution which was forbidden by the law, the others holding that, broadly speaking, all evolutionary instruction was banned.

JUDGE CHAMBLISS, in his opinion, said: "It follows that to forbid the teaching of the biblical account of Divine creation does not expressly, or by fair implications, involve acceptance or approval of instantaneous creation held to by some literalists. One is not prohibited from teaching that 'days,' as used in the Book of Genesis, means days of twenty-four hours, the literalist view; or days of 'a thousand years' or more, as held by liberalists; so long as the teaching does not exclude God as the author of human life." It is interesting to note that these statements fall into line with those of the Catholic Church which, though of course absolutely condemning materialistic evolution (a wholly inconceivable thing, by the way) leaves her children free to accept either theistic evolution, or the creationary hypothesis of pre-Darwinian days.

ON MORE than one occasion, The Commonweal has referred to the Menorah movement in American Judaism, and to pay it what must (under the circumstances) be considered the compliment of seeing in its efforts to realize the Hebraic spiritual and cultural inheritance, something very like a parallel, in another field, to its own effort. Of the conference which has just concluded under the auspices of the Intercollegiate Menorah Association in New York City, it is high enough praise to say that it was worthy in every respect of the spirit, at the same time ideal in aspiration and keenly actual in perception, that has animated the Menorah Journal from its first issue. Especially interesting was the opening lecture, by Mr. Lewis Mum-

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ford, whose name is no stranger to these columns. In surveying The American Scene, so far as it affects Judaism, Mr. Mumford waxed pardonably indignant over the "false alternative" which exacts from the Jewish immigrant one of two things—"retrospective and isolated ghettoes," or a "100 percent Americanism" which virtually means the casting of everything, save an inherited shrewdness, into the discard. Mutatis mutandis—Mr. Mumford's objections to so stark a challenge, and his insistence that there is a middle course might be applied to almost any category of immigrants. It is an interesting and not altogether cheering consideration to look back over the history of immigration in the last sixty years, and to surmise what the benefit to the culture and dignity of American life might have been, had its new citizens come into it, not as isolated and bewildered units, stunned into conformity, but as ordered groups fully aware of the value of their contribution to the complex national genius.

CANON HOWSON, an Anglican rector, has caused considerable discussion in England by a sermon, in which he made the assertion that a hundred years hence there will be no "Merrie England." He declared that there would be less poverty and drastic dealing with the unfit; but over all, deadly dullness. He is only one man venturing a guess, but it is likely that his guess is a fairly good one. One can only estimate its value by studying trends of the past and the present. "Merrie England" passed with the substitution for a religion, which made work a delight and recreation a complete relaxation, of a gospel of "getting on in the world" which encouraged the exploitation of one's neighbor to this supreme aim, and which crushed all merriment as a menace to efficiency. Why look forward a full century to the passing of "Merrie England," when for more than a century past, the Englishman has been known to the rest of the world as the individual with a fixed determination to take his pleasures sadly? There is only one factor which the Anglican divine may have omitted from his calculations in making his prophecy, and which may alter the whole aspect of English life in the next century—every year, for several years past, some 10,000 Englishmen have returned to the Church of their fathers. If these conversions continue to increase, it may be that the deadly pall of dullness will be lifted, and that once more Saint George will be invoked as the patron of a land of happiness and true merriment.

THAT recent debate in London, between Gilbert K. Chesterton and Lady Rhondda, on The Menace of the Leisured Woman, with Bernard Shaw as chairman contributing to the discussion, must have been worth attending. Never has leisure had a more consistent and valiant champion than it has in the person of G. K. C. When the most prolific of writers has had an hour or two to spare from his labors as an essayist, a critic, a philosopher, a producer of detective stories, and a working editor, he has used them to scatter the glad tidings from the public platform of the loveliness of leisure by the home fire, or a good loaf at ease in his inn. So when one of the busiest of women announced her intention of upholding the thesis that the existence of the leisured woman constituted a grave menace to modern civilization, it became imperative that the apostle of the quiet and peaceful should appear to champion the cause of those for whom the strenuous life has no attractions. He expressed the fear that the woman of leisure who forswore pleasure for herself, might occupy her time wholly in interfering with the pleasures of other people. Such fear is not unfounded; in fact, in days when, as the chairman pointed out, the house and the housekeeper have been got rid of, and service-flats and residential hotels have taken their place, and when practising birth control has left no children to take the attention of the woman of means, if she cannot enjoy her leisure, she manifests a determination to see that that leisure becomes a burden to all.

"PURE POETRY"

FRANCE has been stirred by a peculiar and, in so far as most Americans are concerned, ethereal debate. During the course of his formal address to the members of the Academy, the Abbé Henri Bremond proposed the question: "What is pure poetry?" He averred that even the fragments of a genuine poet's work are suffused with a spiritual vitality which is immediately perceptible but which does not depend upon the ideas, facts, or even images outlined.

What is this vitality? The Abbé did not undertake to answer the question immediately, but suggested that it be termed "pure poetry" in contradistinction to all subsidiary elements which, in their turn, might well be called "impure poetry." These remarks opened a veritable stadium for contestants of every variety. During weeks the pages of the French literary papers and reviews bristled with discussion, and the most eminent critics, philosophers, and creative writers signed their names to published comment. In addition, letters poured in from every part of the world—letters from scientists, from poets, from simple villagers who wished to report what they had come to feel during quiet evenings spent in the company of masters. It was the lot of the Abbé Bremond to receive visits from authorities in phonetics and physics, who carried their inventions with them and guaranteed results. One echo of the debate reached this country, in the guise of a paper contributed to the New York Times Book Review by the inimitable Paul Souday. But M. Souday's eloquent defense of "reason," fortified as it was by his general opaqueness of temperament, served only to make readers of the Times wonder once again why it must be our national fate to encourage the worst of European critics. But pos-

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sibly it is assumed—this may be said in passing—that even though M. Souday is neither informative nor effective, he is unconsciously amusing.

Well, the two aspects of the debate which demand attention are the interest which it aroused and the conclusions to which it was brought. Even though few of the Abbé Bremond's correspondents and fellow-critics could define poetry, they were able to manifest great familiarity with it and to show that they had formulated valuable and often profound ideas about it. The résume of the discussion, published in two volumes, has already attained more than twenty editions; and it is quite correct to say (what could not be said outside of aesthetic, Catholic France) that not even the problem of the franc or the fortunes of M. Poincairé aroused more intense sympathy. This is encouraging to a generation which has listened rather penitentially to Spengler and the expressionists. The conclusions arrived at by the Abbé Bremond are diverse, but the most significant is his identification of the experience which is the source of poetry with the experience which is the source of mysticism. Not that the two are the same. Though both are "supra-rational," in the sense that they are guided neither by logic nor by cosmic actuality, yet poetry is a tentative essay of the spiritual force which in true mysticism finds its proper sphere and its winged flight. Accordingly, rational standards in the creation or judgment of literature—everything that is "classic" in the sense of Boileau or Pope—are negative of poetry as such. In this sense it is correct to define the romantic attitude as the correct one—a statement which the Abbé Bremond had made prior to the debate, and which had caused a considerable flutter.

It is an excellent thing that points of view like this should be brought to the general attention. Ages of education, like our own, need to be reminded that their neatly arrived at formulae do not explain all the mysteries of art and religion. And yet, if we may for our part inject a word into the debate, too close an identification of "poetry and prayer" seems to encourage a mistake which, it is true, is the opposite of the rationalistic mistake. Is not the word, which is the material of the poet, a vessel of reason as well as a wave of sound? The most elementary combination of syllable and sense is already a ship afloat. The poet may attach more importance to the shadowy suggestions of a term than to its precise content; but that means merely that he is adding to the achievement of the most important faculty of human nature the achievement of the other faculties. Similarly, prayer needs definiteness of intention, of import, of petition if it is to avoid being merely an "elevation of the spirit." Would it not, therefore, be more correct to say that poetry is pure expression of the personality of man, including reason? The problem, you see, leads very far. It brings us directly, in fact, to the basic matters which the world today is once more anxious to decide.

THE ALPHABET

GENERATIONS of school-children have been taught that our alphabet came from Phoenicia, the inhabitants of that region being the first to advance beyond the pictographic stage of Egyptian hieroglyphics. This idea is a part of the great theory which derives all culture from the eastern end of the Mediterranean. But if the discoveries recently announced by M. Salomon Reinach should prove all they are asserted to be, this conclusion must be discarded.

Some years ago, the son of a French farmer who was clearing some land near Vichy, came upon two bricks with curious markings on them. He showed them to the village school-master, who in turn showed them to the village doctor. The latter happened to be interested in archaeology, and he bought the patch of ground from the farmer, and since then has been excavating it with the help of the boy who made the first find. No metal, nor any Celtic or Roman pottery has been found. The discoveries are of an earlier age, and consist of a few neolithic polished ax-heads and flint implements, the material of which must have been brought from a distance, since there is no flint in this district.

Curious vases, perhaps funerary, some of them like the so-called "owl vases" of Troy, have also been found. These have faces modeled on them, with eyes and nose, but no mouth, indicating that death is silence. Pebbles, with carvings of animals, seem to indicate the very end of the old stone age—perhaps six or seven thousand years ago. But by far the most remarkable objects which have been discovered are the clay tablets first unearthed by the farmer's son, several more of which have been found. They are covered with long and well-engraved inscriptions. At first there was considerable suspicion about them, but they have been examined by competent authorities who consider them genuine.

As yet these tablets are untranslated, and are written in a language which had an alphabet of ninety letters. Our alphabet has only twenty-six letters, and the Gaelic even fewer. However, as some of the characters appear to be indifferently written, going either to the right or left, it is possible to reduce the number to about fifty. Among these are to be found every one of the letters of our alphabet except b. They are not formed exactly as we form them today, but they are recognizable by palaeographers as forms of our letters familiar in archaic writings. Hence there appears to have been in western Europe a genuine alphabet of great antiquity. It is unlikely that these inscriptions will ever be translated.

We may lament the impossibility of deciphering the tablets found near Vichy, but if their authenticity continues to stand the test of experts, the discovery will certainly gratify those who believe in a western origin for European civilization.

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POLITICS IN THE SUNNY SOUTH

By J. C. O'CONNELL

PANORAMAS of religious bigotry in the South are bogies which terrify and intimidate many people. Of late it has become quite definitely customary to associate these things especially with Alabama; and apart from the general political significance of what is implied, it is important as a matter of national history to see how far this custom is justified. Alabama, as a whole, rejected the Klan when other southern and several northern states accepted it. The Methodist Church throughout the state reaped credit from the fact that its presiding bishop and leading ministers denounced it publicly as unchristian and un-American. Many state leaders of the Presbyterian and Baptist churches also fought the organization and discouraged their members from joining it. The state division of the American Legion openly opposed it. How then, it may well be asked, could the Klan in Alabama elect a governor and a United States senator? Why has it apparently gained strength there while its power has waned in other southern states? Georgia, where it was born, Texas and Oklahoma, where it held political control, have repudiated it. What has happened to bring this moribund organization back to life in Alabama?

It is the purpose of this article to show that Alabama is the victim of a political accident; that the reported Klan strength there is only on the surface, and that the great majority of the people of the state discountenance racial and religious intolerance.

The Klan governor and Klan senator were nominated in the Democratic primary last August. That primary is tantamount to election in a state where the total Republican vote is only a negligible 45,000 out of an approximate registration of 550,000. There were four candidates for governor and four for United States senator in the race, and the total vote cast was 439,860. The two Klan candidates obtained 133,965 votes. Thus their following, largely developed by secret organization and oath-bound pledges, formed less than 30 percent of the Democratic electorate. The Klan candidate for governor received 61,494 votes and his three competitors 161,152. He defeated his nearest competitor by only 1,825 votes.

The result was heralded as a victory for the Klan by its chief who was said by three Birmingham newspapers, and by the Associated Press and other news agencies, to have declared that "he had 150,000 men in Alabama who would scratch Al Smith's name off the ballot," if the Democratic party nominated him for the presidency. That fact was published far and wide, but the sequel was not published outside the state.

A week later the Klan official denied the statement, having heard from the recognized Democratic leaders that they resented his assumption of authority to speak for the party. The spark of resentment he had kindled flared into the fire of an independent movement threatening to consume the candidates of the "invisible empire." If this announced its intention to scratch Al Smith in the event of his nomination, then the 70 percent of loyal Alabama Democrats not affiliated with the Klan could assume the right to scratch the Klan candidates in the November election. The sword cut both ways, but it cut harder and deeper in the state offices, and the two nominees lost no time in making their partisan eat his own words. The primary election figures showed the comparative weakness of organized bigotry in the state and the small chance a Klan candidate would have against an anti-Klan candidate in a clean-cut fight. Not one daily paper of twenty-one published in the state, and only two of seventy-eight weekly papers supported the Klan candidates.

The city government of Montgomery gave the Klan its worst jolt when it refused permission for a parade of the organization at the inauguration of the governor the Klan had elected. William A. Gunter, Jr., the mayor of Montgomery and an official of considerable backbone, announced that he would swear in the entire white male population of the city as an auxiliary police force to prevent the parade if the Klan insisted on taking part in the inauguration as an organized body.

The same city of Montgomery, a typical community of the old South, has afforded an excellent example of religious amity more in keeping with the real situation in Alabama and the social and political relations of its people than the present Klan activity. The heart of the state is sound, as witness the following series of incidents:

The Catholic authorities appointed Reverend Manuel P. Campodonico to a parish in Montgomery. The name would suggest that he is an Italian, but he was born near Pensacola, Florida, and is a member of a family established there for several generations. He was sent to Italy as a boy to study for the priesthood and while there developed a musical talent which found expression in several Masses and sacred compositions. At the outbreak of the world war he became a private soldier in the Italian army. When America entered the war, he applied for and received a transfer to the army of his native country. As a soldier who had won a decoration, the Montgomery post of the American Legion welcomed Father Campodonico warmly. As a musician with several published works, an organist and a choir director, the musical clubs of Montgomery gave him an equally warm reception. Prior to his advent in the Alabama capital, the Catholic community had

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celebrated the golden jubilee of Monsignor Denis Savage, for fifty years pastor of Saint Peter's congregation and a man of such charm and magnetism and of such broad charity, humility and gentleness, that the governor and other state officers, the city commissioners and a hundred or more notables in education, art, science and literature, joined with their Catholic fellow-citizens in honoring the aged priest.

Monsignor Savage died soon after Father Campodonico went to Montgomery, and his funeral was the occasion of a great public outpouring. Protestants first suggested that a monument should be erected to the dead priest, who, in two yellow fever outbreaks when the disease was a serious affliction in the South and before its source and control were discovered, had nursed the sick of all denominations. Father Patrick Turner, the new pastor of Saint Peter's, suggested that a church serving another part of the city would be the most appropriate monument. That church has been built, and Protestants subscribed to its erection and attended its opening.

As one means of raising funds for the new church, Father Campodonico organized a performance of Gounod's Messe Solennelle, which was given in the local theatre, donated by a Protestant. The principal singers of Gounod's music were the leaders of the Protestant and Jewish church choirs of Montgomery. From the same source and the Catholic choirs a chorus of 100 was organized. The orchestra was supplied by forty members of the Masonic Shrine band—the same temple of the Shrine which has given to the national order its present imperial potentate, Judge David Crosland. The stage furnishings for the accommodation of the large chorus were provided without cost by Fred J. Cramton, a Methodist, brother of Congressman Cramton of Michigan.

That is not all. The pastor and trustees of the First Baptist Church gave their Sunday-school room and the use of lights and a piano for the rehearsals for the Mass, which went on almost nightly for more than a month. And the performance was such a success from an artistic standpoint that the musical faculty of the Woman's College of Alabama, a Methodist institution, requested that it be repeated in the chapel of the college for their 600 students. Father Campodonico went to the college and conducted the Mass, and the state council of the Knights of Columbus being in session in Montgomery at the time, accepted two rows of seats tendered for the performance by Dr. Walter Agnew, president of the college.

There are four orphan asylums in Mobile, two Catholic, one Episcopalian, and one general Protestant. The community supports these asylums from one fund collected annually, and prorates the collection according to the number of inmates. The head of the civic organization which carries on this work is Gordon Smith, a Baptist, and the majority of the committee collecting and apportioning the fund are non-Catholics.

Captain John Craft, a Presbyterian and high Mason, state senator from his county, wrote a letter to the Montgomery Advertiser on November 24, 1925, complimenting Dr. F. B. Cullens, of Ozark, one of the political and intellectual leaders of Alabama, for publishing a reminder of what Tammany and the Catholic Democrats of New York did to aid southern soldiers, prisoners of war at Fort Lafayette, in the 'sixties. These letters and others that followed from equally prominent men were the reaction within the state to the National Democratic Convention of that year. A paragraph from Captain Craft's letter will describe the trend of the whole correspondence:

> When the South needed friends, Tammany Hall was ever loyal to the traditions of self-government and democracy and it ill becomes us, men who profess to be leaders of the Christian religion, to inject hatred and animosity into these political discussions. I don't know Governor Smith of New York, except by his deeds and record, and I commend him, a self-made man. We should be proud that America is producing such stalwart leaders.

That "twenty-four votes for Underwood" slogan of Alabama at the Madison Square convention should not be forgotten by the Democrats of the nation. It demonstrated that Alabama was not controlled by the Klan.

But, aye, there's the rub, what about United States Senator James Thomas Heflin? The question can be answered in one phrase—"Tom" Heflin is a bigger entertainment to the informed people of Alabama than he is to the country at large. Like the Knight of Mancha, he gives battle to windmills. For a long time he wielded his trusty blade against the Agricultural Department and its cotton crop estimates. The Senator scored his only success in that fight. He got into it when cotton was advancing in price. When the price stayed up for a few years the doxology of rural Alabama became, "Praise Tom from whom all blessings flow." Even "Tom" Heflin could not further pretend to suspend the law of supply and demand for his Alabama constituents in the face of last year's crop, however, and the Senator had to look around for another windmill. When he pounded the desks in the Senate, knocked over the books and shook his fist at the American nation, the cotton farmers of Alabama, with the unsold crop and the heavy hearts, knew that "Tom" was still on the job.

The religious intolerance manifested by 30 percent of Alabama's population at the present time, of which Senator Heflin has made himself the Washington mouthpiece, is pathological as well as political. In this it resembles the Ibsen play, Ghosts, recurring as a disease even to the second and third generations. It thrives in illiteracy as disease thrives among the unclean. Some day the American commonwealths will drive it out as they are driving illiteracy out, and the politicians who have lived on it will be driven from public life at the same time.

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THE SENATOR FROM ALABAMA

By SOLOMON JUNEAU

IT IS now some years since Senator J. Thomas Heflin, of Alabama, was characterized by the New York Times as "solemn, tragic, sublime, endless." These adjectives suggested nothing more dire than a Falstaffian figure addicted to sonorous diction. Of late, however, Mr. Heflin's suddenly revealed ambition to play with deeply rooted popular prejudices and animosities has transfigured him into a nuisance of some proportions. I have an idea that many simple people who read newspaper accounts of his remarks concerning secret Catholic preparations for war with Mexico believe every word they look upon. Therefore—and therefore only—it is worth while seeing the man as he is and weighing his many qualifications as a public sage. After all, Homer found it worth while to describe Thersites.

During November, 1920, Mr. Heflin was chosen to fill the unexpired term of Senator Bankhead—an event which he promptly followed up by announcing that "prices for cotton will be higher." The fluffy crop of his native state had, in fact, been the supreme Heflin bulwark during sixteen long years in Congress. His personal fame reposed chiefly, however, upon what one writer termed the "endurance and calisthenics" of his speech. These qualities were manifested in violent antagonism to woman suffrage; in eloquent pleas for the celebration of Mothers' Day; and in various other ways predominatingly harmless. "Cotton Tom's" genuine opportunity came with the outbreak of the world war. He voted staunchly for the war resolution, assailed Representative Kitchin for manifesting some opposition, and spoke eloquently for the draft bill. A more resolute patriot never breathed. In his eagerness to serve, he wrote a letter to Secretary Daniels advocating specially constructed ships packed with cotton, which would keep afloat after being torpedoed. For some reason, however, the project came to nothing and the Senator cast about him for other gear.

Never was there so efficient a human seismograph for the detection of enemy manoeuvres. On April 6, 1918, he delivered a famous address that in addition to advocating the expulsion of Senator La Follette and the internment of Representative Berger, sharply reproved another member of the House:

> "The gentleman from Illinois got up here yesterday and told the world where all our boys in the marine service are located. Germany has been trying to find out how many men we have moved across the sea, and how many we still have at home. German spies have tried to find out where our cavalry horses are located. They found 500 of them in Kentucky and they poisoned them.

This extraordinary patriotic vigilance had been surpassed, however, during the course of an incident which occurred some six months earlier. Mr. Heflin at that time asserted he knew "there is a gambling room in Washington where pro-German and peace-at-any-price members of Congress get their pay by being extraordinarily lucky at cards." He demanded an investigation at once and the subsequent expulsion of those found guilty. The matter aroused so much attention that a special committee was appointed by the House to investigate the "charges made by Honorable J. Thomas Heflin." It reported that he denied having made the charges, and that he was "subject to criticism." Even this calling of his bluff did not, however, silence the "Wireless" of Alabama. As late as August 14, 1919, he had such confidence in German money that he assailed it as being behind the propaganda to defeat the League of Nations. Perhaps, however, it would be well to agree with an expert's opinion which holds that the most important thing done by Mr. Heflin during his years in the House was "wearing summer white flannels long before they came to be regarded as 'sports' garments."

This was the man who entered the Senate prepared to continue the best oratorical traditions of Webster and Calhoun. Naturally his effort in this direction met with the recognition it deserved. During 1918 there was read into the Congressional Record an editorial from the Age-Herald, a prominent organ of Mr. Heflin's native state. "Though the two-minute rule was then in force," remarked the editor, "Heflin sent 2,700 words of his speech with the introduction: 'Heflin holds House in rapt attention while he spoke on the prohibition amendment, in part as follows. . . .' The speech was simply overwhelming. When finally the end came, the telegraph editor sighed in despair and was heard to mutter, 'Two minutes! What if he had talked an hour?' " The editor went on to remark that though the address had been sent collect, it was "politely but firmly returned." But despite the unappreciating attitude of the Age-Herald, the 2,700 words were duplicated upon many an occasion. Mr. Heflin arose to demand the expulsion of L. Jones, a negro who had apparently uttered an ejaculation in the visitors' gallery; to call Senator Glass a liar in a dispute over the Federal Reserve Board; to charge the existence of a deep plot laid by his political enemies; and to attack Harvard University for having conferred a degree upon W. P. G. Harding. Finally there came that most touching occasion which was to reveal clearly the Senator's profound attachment to poetry and other devices of culture.

On Washington's birthday, 1926, he arose to request the insertion into the Congressional Record of a poem written by one of Alabama's sons—"a man of

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very brilliant intellect and of marked poetic genius." Those interested in collecting the treasures of American literature and, incidentally, in profiting by the example of their great public men, may dig out the entire masterpiece for themselves. I cannot refrain, however, from quoting the following representative lines:

> In the infancy of the republic
> When the nation's foundations were wrought,
> Through the wisdom of Washington's judgment
> And the justice of Jefferson's thought,
> Providentially planned and perfected
> Was the spot of her capital's home.

The ingratitude of the nation is nowhere better exemplified than by the fact that shortly after the official adoption of these verses, editorials cropped up everywhere demanding the curtailment of the cost of printing the Congressional Record. But though this caustic comment often mentioned him by name as an offending example, Mr. Heflin staunchly fortified himself with the knowledge that he had talked into print more apocryphal quotations from Washington and Lincoln than any other human being of whom we know.

By this time, naturally enough, the Senator had become a Washington landmark. His light-colored waistcoat was now the symbol by which newcomers in the press gallery recognized him. The older fellows, of course, simply didn't recognize him. A slightly prejudiced observer once described Mr. Heflin as "tilting down Pennsylvania Avenue, usually in a long frock coat, with perfectly manicured eyebrows, wondering that the Avenue does not tip to one side because he is all on that side." When Senator Reed remarked that during the grandiose periods of Heflinian oratory "the stumps in the Potomac River bobbed up and down in unison," the retort was simple and prophetic—"They will be bobbing again." And beyond any shadow of a doubt they are.

Behind the Senator's present activities—which are, be it noted, pacifistic in a manner irreconcilable with his fervent public and private history—there lies a peculiar, complex episode which can only be defined as the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in Alabama. Though this really tolerant state is not at all in the throes of bigotry, political circumstance (in a way that is described elsewhere in this issue of The Commonweal) conspired to give the "invisible empire" considerable political authority. During 1923, the election of Mayfair to the Senate from Texas raised the question of eligibility on account of his professed association with the Klan. The Texas headquarters of Klandom then issued a statement saying that if opposition were manifested to their chosen representative, J. Thomas Heflin would rise to lead a movement to unseat Senator Lodge. The connection here was never very obvious. But when during 1924, Mr. R. B. Creager, Republican National Committeeman from Texas, circularized the members of the Committee, asking them to go on record at the 1924 convention as denouncing the "invisible empire," it was Mr. Heflin who made the telling retort of starting an inquiry into certain real-estate transactions associated with Mr. Creager. This inquiry expanded into an investigation held before the Senate Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, the accusation being that Mr. Creager had used the mails to defraud. In the end nothing came of the investigation, but—and the point is worth noting—Mr. Creager had been silenced.

So far so good. But during September, 1926, Senator Heflin distinguished himself by delivering a pompous though unnecessary address in advocacy of United States entry into the World Court. Immediately thereupon, Hiram W. Evans, grand kleagle, addressed an audience of Texans to the effect that "we need to get away from such men as Tom Heflin." For the Klan, it will be remembered, had decided that "waves from Geneva shall never pollute these shores." Is there a connection between these sundry events and the latest display of oratorical energy by the Senator from Alabama? I hasten to reply that I do not know if there is. As a matter of fact, it seems likely that a more correct estimate of the sources of the display was formulated by Senator Reed when he said: "Intolerance, sir, is the child of ignorance. Give me the radius of any man's intelligence, and I will describe the circumference of his tolerance." The inference is perfectly clear. In all likelihood, J. Thomas Heflin will go right ahead being intolerant. He simply cannot help it.

Mr. Heflin classifies himself as a "lawyer and public servant," and must be accepted as a senatorial reality. There is really only a political connection between him and his state, which has supplied the national scene with many a genuine statesman, many a keen-witted soldier, and many a commendable intellect. Similarly, the only thing which could make him relatively important and dangerous is the possibility that his present attitude in the Senate has been cleverly assigned to him by some forces which prefer to remain incognito. In all sober truth, the injection of religious feeling into an issue complicated by the existence of manifest religious persecution, is a matter to which public opinion cannot profitably remain indifferent. But it is well to take the matter calmly and to concede that everything Heflin has to say is on the surface—the product of his own redoubtable imagination and voracious reading. He has hoisted himself into a pose which not even the furious frisking of a large kerchief over a face empurpled with oratorical passion can deprive of a certain impressive ominousness. To him it must be delightful—almost the goal of a too, too long Falstaffian career. But to others his present remarks ought to be, not a reflection of public opinion, nor even an insult. They should be accepted very simply as nothing more than the braggadocio of a buffoon.

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NATIONAL DRAMA WEEK

By ERNEST F. BODDINGTON

IT ALL depends upon where the accent is placed. This National Drama Week, from February 13 to 19 inclusive, announced by the Drama League of America, may be just another of those weeks when for seven days the nation is asked to strain itself to live up to a slogan.

Memory recalls the gallant efforts made to keep the doctor away during Apple Week, which crumpled on the Thursday night when a hurry call brought him to the house to prescribe for two acute cases of the colly-wobbles; it reminds us of the struggles we had with mankind's closest friend during National Underwear Week, until, with sense of patriotic duty heroically performed, we were able to slip back into our B. X. Vs. But if, instead of a call to the nation to discuss the drama each day for a week from breakfast till the closing of the night clubs, it is an invitation to consider for a week the present status and the future prospects of a national drama, that is something else again—and something very much worth while.

If any organization has the right to appeal for a combined and careful study of this subject by intelligent Americans in an endeavor to take stock of the dramatic resources of the country, it is the Drama League of America. Its work is broad and human. Its efforts have not been directed solely to the cultivation of art for art's sake; it has aimed always to broaden community life and to establish a fuller realization of civic concepts throughout the nation by means of the most democratic and most directly appealing of all the arts. Not only has it created audiences for good plays, but in raising cultural standards it has quickened the sense of discrimination in regard to politics and the whole social structure of the nation. The "little theatres" which it has sponsored and encouraged have disclosed much dramatic talent to renew and strengthen the American professional stage and playwrights with an insight into true American life which is becoming every day more valuable and interpretative. They have done more—they have made better Americans by making more understanding Americans.

With a record that should be a source of satisfaction and stimulation, the Drama League of America becomes most surprisingly doleful in issuing its call for Drama Week. It is disturbed because the nation no longer has a Booth or a Mansfield, a McCullough or a Jefferson, to make transcontinental tours and present the plays of "the greatest dramatist who ever lived" in the one-night stands. "The fact," says the circular, "that not a single first-rate actor in America is attempting to draw audiences with Shakespeare is a commentary in a nutshell." A somewhat disingenuous commentary if it be founded on the fact that this is the situation of the moment; an ungracious and unflattering one on the continuous and courageous efforts of Walter Hampden, the recent brilliant contributions of Jane Cowl, Rollo Peters, and John Barrymore, and the original offering of David Warfield. The League likewise is distressed because "the theatre is left to debauching commercial traffic," and the animals in the municipal zoos receive appropriations denied to actors.

This is all very impulsive, not to say hysterical. It is true that nature does not furnish a Booth or a Jefferson or a McCullough in every decade, and that one-night stands no longer offer Shakespeare with the musical glasses or a minstrel show as in the good old days. But why blame "debauching commercial traffic," and grudge their feed to the animals in the zoo? That very fine gentleman, Edwin Booth, was not debauched by this wicked traffic which built what is now the Players' Club and his enduring monument. In fact, it is doubtful if Booth would have felt flattered by a proposition that the city fathers of his day and generation should pass upon the respective claims of the classical drama and the male and female gondolas for Central Park at a meeting of the finance committee.

It is confusing, to say the least, to receive an invitation from the League to consider, as one of the subjects for Drama Week, "the evils and absurdities of censorship" in conjunction with such a plaintive bid for financial support from the municipalities. If the cities are to appropriate the money of the taxpayers to the support of the theatre, they are well started on a road which stretches inevitably toward censorship, not to enlarge on the fact that the whole question of subsidy and public ownership looms over every step taken in such a direction.

I believe, however, that it would be unfair to the Drama League of America to take any of these forebodings and implications too seriously. They are, perhaps, the indication of impatience on the part of some who have worked hard and expected more immediate as well as more impressive results from their labors. Actually, they detract from an accomplishment which has been far from insignificant, and which holds in it the promise of permanent achievement.

There is no indication that dramatic art in America is perishing of neglect. On the contrary, there are many evidences that a real national theatre is growing—slowly, it may be true, but steadily. It is one thing to deplore the loss of the Booths and the McCulloughs; it is another thing to ignore the fact that those who now present for Americans the plays of "the greatest dramatist who ever lived" can offer the whole plays, and not merely one or perhaps two characters in each. There has arisen a support for the

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stars which is almost worthy of special study as a sidelight on the growth of dramatic art in this country. There is no need to rob the zoo monkey of his peanuts in order to rescue the perishing among our promising young actors. They are not perishing, they are prospering; they are not begging, they are giving. There was a time when America looked to England for really finely balanced casts. She has no need to do so today, and in the dressing-rooms of many London theatres the fact is only too well known. The great outstanding stars no longer dominate the stage in the United States, but the average of acting in this country is much higher today than when they reigned. The presentation of even secondary parts is now so often informed by insight and interpreted with intelligence that performances by individuals, which no more than fifteen or even ten years ago would have presaged stardom, are now accepted entirely as a matter of course.

And if this be true of American acting—and I do not think it can be successfully refuted—what shall be said of American playwriting? Here surely there has been a development which shows in a manner to put a period to pessimism. What were the American plays of the last generation, or the plays in which American authors disclosed American life to the rest of the world? To take three popular successes, they were The Heart of Maryland, Barbara Freitchie, and The Climbers. To compare these with three plays by only one American playwright of today, is to visualize the advance that has been made. George Kelly's The Show-Off, Craig's Wife, and Daisy Mayme make them look mechanical and tawdry. There is a man who has something to say, and he is not asking M. Scribe or Herr Freytag by what tricks he shall get his message across. The national drama of America will not be a sermon; but if ever sermon was preached on a stage, and preached on a great topic suggested by certain aspects of American life, it was preached from the text of Craig's Wife. That devastating development of the growth of materialism to a point where every spiritual possession had been lost, was a drama—not a mere theatrical effect. It marched inevitably; it convinced inevitably. Again in the later play, Daisy Mayme, there is the same lack of striving for the unusual, the same simplicity and sureness of line of the artist disclosing the full possibilities of the usual. There is an arresting quality communicated to the commonplace in the scene in which Cliff Mettinger proposes to Daisy Mayme—and that quality is truth, reality.

Once more I return to acknowledgment of the part which the Drama League has played in bringing about these conditions. I believe it will play a still greater part in the evolution of a national theatre of the future. Its suggestions are in most cases sound, as, for example, its insistence on the need for professional guidance in club dramatics and professional standards in all little theatres. But it is a real process of evolution which is taking place. Revolution is neither to be expected nor to be desired.

DIVORCE AS A PASTIME

By ELISABETH MARBURY

THE question will pertinently be raised, as my name is attached to this article, why the utterances of an elderly spinster should have any weight in the consideration of the subject of divorce. What am I supposed to know about it? What value can my opinion have concerning it? The only answer is to be found in the fact that remoteness from an object frequently accentuates the sharpness of its angles, and that the impersonal treatment of a mooted subject is at times more reliable than one in which personal feelings and experiences must necessarily play a major part.

In looking back over the many years through which divorce has gradually assumed an increasing proportion and a decreasing seriousness, I naturally must review the situation with considerable interest, to say the least. I remember vividly the time when a woman who was divorced was regarded socially as "not quite nice," and I can recall the disintegrating progress made when later in a New York fashionable drawing-room, thirteen divorcées were counted to the consternation of those present who gloried in their respectability.

Then came the period when actors and actresses became the target of criticism; so that we heard the phrase "a stage divorce" as though it were of a trivial and recurrent nature.

Little by little, however, people became accustomed to the new order, and society slowly but surely grew used to the idea. Divorce was no longer a brand of disrespect as even the best families were vandalized by it. Evangelical disapproval was no more a restraint. No scarlet letter except as a trimming to a sport blouse was worn upon the breast of those who boasted of a past—so that today, in general society, it is safe to assume that one-third at least of those present have either been divorced or are going to be divorced. It it not wise to inquire as to the health of any woman's husband, lest she retort: "Which one?"

Divorce has become so common that today it does not even elicit surprise—nor does it seem advisable to discuss this from any religious standpoint. In view of the latitude of modern standards, this would only provoke a frank admission on the part of many that the parties involved believe in nothing.

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So I prefer, in order to advance my contention, to regard marriage as a contract into which people have entered in good faith. They have come together agreeing to certain stipulations which are assumed to be obligatory in their execution. This contract, like any other business undertaking, is not contingent upon the adverse conditions which may arise. A man who buys something, and who gives his notes to bind the purchase, must see that these notes are duly met even though he finds grave financial difficulties in living up to his bargain. The law does not accept the excuse that since he signed the contract, his income has decreased.

The men and women who marry have assumed certain responsibilities toward society. They have undertaken, in theory at least, to found and to maintain a home, and to make their contribution to the human race by bringing children into the world. This may not be admitted by many, yet a study of biology emphasizes the truth of the purpose. If they ignore these obligations, they have deliberately entered into a contract under false pretenses. Their credit is thereby impaired. They are not people of integrity with whom to do business.

The natural objective of marriage, despite the modernists, is child-bearing. This is what raises it to dignity; this is what separates it from mere sexual gratification. If a man and woman who marry are honestly barren of offspring, then society should pity them because, with every good disposition, their union has been robbed of its legitimate purpose.

If birth control is to be advocated, why then should not marriage be abrogated? Why should not people live together because of sex urge, without any further sense of moral responsibility than to enjoy each other so long as the appeal endures?

Investigate the facts which induce the average divorce of today. What are they? In the majority of cases, how frequently there is an intentional perversion of truth. Fictitious proofs of adultery, the naming of imaginary co-respondents, are mere subterfuges, framed to falsify testimony and to mislead justice. Perjury is in order, and misstatements hold sway. Remarriages are entered into over the state border-line; relations which are frankly illicit become legal; and thus a foundation of lies merely erects another building of cardboard. The contract is broken with the same lack of integrity as existed when it was made. There never was any honest intention to keep it, nor was there any fear of consequences when it was broken. These recurrent dissolutions become more skilled in the handling as they become more automatic in practice.

A young woman who had been divorced several times, casually remarked to me after a few months of conjugal solitude, that she had never before been so long without a husband. She had acquired the habit, and was lost without a wedding ring.

The mystery to me is why a woman who has no scruples whatever in being the mistress of a man, seems insistent upon the marriage ceremony. Certainly, she cannot be so self-deceived as to imagine that by working up a spurious case which may legally liberate her, and by announcing a new marriage, that she is deceiving anyone but herself as to the validity of this relation. In asking for an explanation, I am often told that to be married makes things easier when a couple has to register in a hotel!

Personally, I believe that the French method of upholding the outward semblance of family respectability, although the parents may lead their private lives apart, is far better than to proclaim infidelities from the housetops, and to toss children about from one parent to the other, or to leave them to the care of someone who happens to furnish a convenient solution for their guardianship.

It is easy, indeed, to indulge in sophistries which offer plausible excuses for any line of conduct, but I have yet to find anyone who is more fertile of self-exoneration than the man or woman who wishes to rid himself or herself from a present marital encumbrance for the purpose of making another matrimonial experiment.

After a while, this microbe of divorce is as recognizable as is any other disease-germ. It frequently becomes chronic.

If men and women who wish to become divorced, would be honest and strip the procedure of all flimsy excuses and of all faking influences, they would often stand so denuded of any legitimate ground even in their own eyes that they might try and stick to their bargains. It is mainly because they work up a case of grievances; because they are unwilling to play the game; because they are selfish and self-indulgent; because they lack patience and discipline; because they are wilful and egotistical; because they want to take and not to give; because deception is easier than truth that people rush into the divorce courts upon the merest provocation, and replace the wedding rings with the same facility as any other ornament that they wear.

If those in business regarded obligations as lightly as do the present-day seekers of divorce, they would soon lose their standing as people of integrity, and would be considered so unreliable that no one would dream of doing business with them.

Epitaph

See a man's life entwined with trees. . . .
These—he planted in his youth,
Watched and tended in his prime;
A few brief passing days of time,
He came to rest beneath their roots.
Here he lies.
How the young green tender shoots
Hold their hands up to the skies.

MARY KATHARINE REELY.

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THE CREED OF THE CRITICS

By ALFRED G. BRICKEL

OUR modern world lacks a catechism of criticism which would fulfil for the unbelieving world the function of the little book which the Catholic Church uses to teach the principal truths of faith. Perhaps the so-called "higher" critics feel that the fluidity of their creed forbids any attempt at its fixation. Yet in the course of the theological reading I have done, I have come across enough detached articles of critical faith to form a creed of critics. These detached articles do not begin in the honest Catholic fashion of, "I believe in God," but are generally introduced by some literary rubric such as, "No modern man or woman is fool enough to believe the old stuff," about, let us say, Moses being the author of the Pentateuch; or Saint John being the author of the Gospel that bears his name.

The first article, the very corner-stone of criticism, is: "Miracles do not happen." I suppose you think that this article cuts out all of the marvelous from the realm of the critics. No, not at all. The critics believe, not in real miracles based on the testimony of history, but in fake miracles—in fairies. It came to me as a pleasant surprise to find out that when the critics cast out miracles in the Catholic sense, they were forced to fill the void by creating a fairyland populous with millions of books and documents they had never seen, and countless authors and "redactors" whose very existence is an imaginary existence.

Take the Gospel of Saint Matthew. The Church offers you that, and vouches for it by strong tradition and the tenacious testimony of sound history. What saith our "higher" critic? He opines, "I am not prepared to deny that perhaps a legendary person named Saint Matthew might have done a few lines of the document called Saint Matthew's Gospel. I know that the book was done by a few dozen 'redactors' who worked on a basic document, or 'Grundschrift,' called 'Q' and the 'Logia.' They also used what later on came to be known as the Gospel of Saint Mark, although Saint Mark never had anything to do with that Gospel." Here we are fairly within the gates of this creative fairydom. The solid historical character of the one-time tax-collector is brushed aside with angry impatience, and a whole crowd of fairies, "redactors," unknown sources, "Logia" and what-nots are thrown into the void created by the disappearance of Saint Matthew.

The test of the fairy-tale applies to the critic's vision of who did Saint Matthew's Gospel, or who did Saint Mark's Gospel, for the test of common sense fails completely. Just as we never met the characters from Alice in Wonderland, so we never met the people, who, as the critic avers, did the Gospel. And as it is felt to be impertinent to inquire too anxiously after the reality of white mice whisking along a carriage made of a pumpkin, so too it is bad manners for a Catholic theologian to inquire about the multitudinous populace that stalks through the creative fairydom of the critics, and peeps at us from every page of their books. "Had anybody seen the 'redactors'? Had anybody seen 'Q'?"

No, nobody saw these people or things. The critics are willing to admit this. But they must exist, for if "Q" did not exist, if the "redactors" did not exist, the critics could not prove that Saint Matthew did not write his Gospel. And this was the thing to be proved. This is the tail that wags the dog. You see, the critics had it in the back of their heads all the time that the tax-collector never wrote the Gospel, because if he did then the Catholic Church was too solid a fact at too early a date. So the critics backed away from documentary history and told a tall tale of people and of things never seen on land or sea or in the sky. The first article of the critic's creed then is: "Miracles are not possible." Its corollary is a very base of their critical system, and it is this: "Fairy-tales are possible."

You might think that the critic would admit that he had been romancing when he was pinned down by this statement about miracles and fairy-tales. But the critic saith serenely: "You Catholic theologians do me a rank injustice. I am a man of science. I don't believe in fairy-tales. I do not reject Saint Matthew's authorship of the Gospel, nor do I reject any book of the Bible, because I disbelieve miracles. I reject Saint Matthew's authorship because I know my Greek so well. I can tell from the style of a book alone who wrote it, and how many hands were busy at it." This brings us to the second article of the critic's creed: "Diversity of style proves diversity of authorship." Under diversity of style, the critic includes turns of thought, ideas, atmosphere—as well as difference in the literary value of the words or phrases used.

Now there is no reason for supposing that human nature was very different in the first century from what it is in the twentieth. Let us glance at the principle of "diversity of style proves diversity of authorship," as it works out in modern writings whose authorship is not disputed. A long time ago, I read a book called The Path to Rome—a book delightful in literary style and in ideas. In that book, I read these lines about the Germans: "Then on the left you have all the Germanies—a great sea of confused and dreaming people, lost in philosophies and creating music, frozen for the moment under a foreign rigidity, but some day to thaw again and to give a word to us others."

Read that and even more complimentary things

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about the Germans in the same book, and then read Europe and the Faith, or The History of England, or The Cruise of the Nona—or other books Hilaire Belloc has written since 1914—and you will realize how futile is the principle, "diversity of style and thought is a proof of diversity of authorship." On that critical principle, Belloc did not write the books which he did write after 1914, because he talks in an entirely different style about the Germans in different books. Not only do the ideas of The Path to Rome differ from those in Belloc's later books, but the literary style is quite different. The idea that different styles mean different authors, is a principle of criticism, but it flies in the face of literary history, ancient and modern. What two books are so different in ideas and style as the Confessions, and the City of God? Yet Saint Augustine wrote both. The Confessions have won a place in the hearts of all cultured people on account of their quiet, homely, vulgar Latin; while the rugged, tortuous style of the City of God has repelled many a reader. People talk about the greatness of the City of God—but they read the Confessions. How many styles has Dante? He wrote his epic in sonorous Tuscan; his De Monarchia in one Latin style; and his letters to the great in another Latin style. If we were not sure of the authorship, how surely the critics would have decreed that at least three individuals wrote the books in question.

Newman is another confutation of the critics. Even in his sermons, the earlier Anglican ones differ in style and in ideas from the later Catholic sermons. You will not discover in the Anglican sermons the easy style and unhampered fulness of the Catholic sermons. It goes without saying that Newman has different styles for different subject-matters. The Essay on Development is not quite in the same style as The Dream of Gerontius. The critics would long ago have resolved the writings of Newman into a constellation—into a whole milky way of writers.

Another article in the critic's creed, which greets us at every turn in Old-Testament criticism, is this: "The poetry in a book cannot come from the same hand as the prose. Saint Luke could not have set down the Magnificat, because he wrote the Acts; and the song of Lamech could not have come from the author who wrote the rest of Genesis. This sort of stuff is ladled out by modern criticism as "the assured results of modern science"—which it surely is not. It is the cocksure pronouncement of a certain sort of private judgment parading under the name of science.

Scores of names leap into our minds when we hear it stated as a self-evident postulate of criticism that the same man cannot write prose and poetry. Has not the writer of Orthodoxy written The Ballad of the White Horse? Did not Belloc recently bring out some of the best modern poetry? And who will say that he never could write prose? Masefield and Alice Meynell; Francis Thompson and Aubrey De Vere; Coventry Patmore and Thomas Hardy; Pearse and MacDonagh; Corkery and Maurice Baring; Helen Parry Eden and Enid Dinnis; Tom Kettle, Oscar Wilde, Mangan and Lionel Johnson, Joseph Mary Plunkett—these are but a few of the names that throng upon us when we see in cold print the bold declaration: "A poet cannot write prŏse." Then we remember Goldsmith, Milton, Dryden, Chaucer, Saint Ambrose, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Cardinal Newman, Dante, Goëthe, Schiller, Racine. No doubt we should remember some more names if we thought of the matter for some short space. And all the time we keep thinking, "What do the critics of the Bible read?" Do they read at all? Contrary to the critical assertion that a poet cannot write prose, we assert that it is rare to find a poet who cannot come down from Parnassus, or a prose writer who cannot scale at least its lower slopes.

Before the critics stabilize their creed, they might heed a phenomenon that occurs rather frequently in history. How often have the critics been fooled by following their principle, "We can tell who wrote a book by looking at the style." Macpherson fooled the critics of his day by giving them Ossian's Poems. It was only after people had begun to translate these supposed translations from the Gaelic into other languages besides English, that suspicions were aroused. Critics called for the Scotch-Gaelic originals, and Macpherson admitted that he had translated from originals that were not producible. Chatterton, too, deceived the critics. Perhaps they may say that the examples of Chatterton and Macpherson do not damage the claims of internal evidence as a sole criterion of authorship.

Then we can show them a few modern instances. Montgomery Carmichael who recently wrote Christopher and Cressida, produced a book some years ago which professed to be a life of his father. It was entitled, The Life of John William Walshe, and seemed to be sober biography. This book was just as much a piece of fiction as Christopher and Cressida, but it fooled the critics. More recently still, the critics swallowed whole—hook, bait, and sinker—a book called The Diary of a Young Lady of Fashion. Now the critics are rubbing their heads again. After they had proved conclusively from an examination of the internal evidence that the book is real eighteenth-century stuff, that it challenges comparison with Pepys, that it gives us a clear insight into the feminine world of those days—then they happen upon disillusionment. The girl who wrote the book recently in a castle in western Ireland has now told the critics that they have been fooled again.

These few detached articles from the creed of the critics may help some readers to see that, as a creed, it has not mysteries, but contradictions. It is a harder strain on the reason than the Apostles' Creed which has mysteries, but is not contradictory. In fact, some people would be unkind enough to say that the creed of critics is just pure unreason blowing a loud trumpet.

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JACQUES COPEAU

By GEORGE N. SHUSTER

ON THE evening before his return to France, Jacques Copeau saw that the Theatre Guild production of The Brothers Karamazov, which he had come to direct, was a decided success, that ancient connections established in the United States during 1917 had survived the stress of time, and that at least one group of New York actors was eager to acquire whatever of technique or inspiration was needed to qualify their work as an art. Incidentally he saw me. The meeting was arranged because M. Copeau was kind enough to think I represented a section of the public with which he has particularly much in common. It need hardly be said here that this singularly energetic, idealistic and sacrificial dramatist is a converti. But it should be borne in mind that his example has pretty definitely guided the various things now being done in France on behalf of religious drama.

When Copeau abandoned the Vieux-Colombier in 1924, that little old theatre of the Rive Gauche had accumulated an extraordinary amount of attention and atmosphere. It was pleasant to go there early in the evening for one of the brilliant public lectures about poetry or dramatic art, given by such men as Jules Romains and Paul Valéry; it was more pleasant still to wait for the play, rendered by a company upon which Copeau had expended all his energies as a director of acting and mise en scène. This company was the thing upon which he concentrated.

When he first took up the practice of play production, Copeau was known as a dramatic critic and a leader of young litterateurs grouped by La Nouvelle Revue Française. To his mind, the French theatre had succumbed to commercialism in root and branch. Even the movements of rebellion, notably Antoine's naturalistic stage, had gone off on the wrong scent. Therefore it was necessary first to re-create the instrument of drama—that is, the stage proper—and secondly to create the drama itself. The peculiar virtue of Copeau lay in the fact that he avoided trying to evolve the new out of nothing. By going back to the classics, by learning how to act in interpreting the classics, one might (he believed) establish the foundation upon which originality could successfully stand. Apart from that, his habit was to be most tolerant to diverse experiment. He tried out plays by young authors who would not have been given a chance elsewhere. The members of his company "rotated" so that the star of one performance became the ingénue of another. And in the famous "school" which existed side by side with the theatre proper, he strove to instil definite principles into the young.

Why then, was the Vieux-Colombier abandoned? The reason, M. Copeau said to me, was the strain imposed by the ceaseless routine of theatre life in the city. Forced by the incessant command, "Rehearse, rehearse," neither actors nor directors had time for creative leisure, for rising above their work instead of being crushed under it. They were in danger of succumbing to the very influences which they had set out to combat. And so, in spite of the protests of many friends, M. Copeau assembled a number of young people who promised to develop in the life of the theatre, packed up as much of the spirit of the Vieux-Colombier as could be transported, and departed for the hamlet of Pernand-Vergelesses, in the Côte-d'or. To this new "school," where a definite regimen is followed and where the foundation is strictly classical, Copeau is now going back. He declared that his present object would be to develop a few original plays which might then be produced by the young company in a number of large cities. His idea, therefore, is now a fresh, native stock company going from the country to the city rather than a blasé association headed the other way. Recently, he declared, a successful effort had been made with l'Illusion, written by himself.

It will be obvious to those familiar with the religious drama of Henri Ghéon and his company of Compagnons de Notre-Dame that a similar purpose and method prevails here. M. Ghéon has left us fully informed of his great indebtedness to Copeau. Prior to the war and his own conversion, Ghéon was a member of the Nouvelle Revue Française group; and his first play, entitled l'Eau de Vie, was staged at the Vieux-Colombier. Later on, the same theatre produced what was practically the first of the "mystery plays"—Le Pauvre sous l'Escalier—Copeau himself taking the rôle of Saint Alexis. The Compagnons de Notre-Dame are also a traveling company of amateurs; and though their primary object is religious rather than technically artistic, it is correct to say that they have developed a charming and fervent style of presentation. Recently, during the observance of the Franciscan centenary, Copeau took the title rôle in Ghéon's Saint-François d'Assise, given in the theatre of the Champs-Elysées. No direct connection exists, however, between the two organizations. The Vieux-Colombier continues to be interested primarily in the art of drama as such.

Copeau spoke warmly of Ghéon, confirming the present writer's conviction that Le Comedien et la Grace—a play rejected by the Comédie Française but published with great success—would probably get a good hearing in the United States. He felt, however, that the work of Claudel would probably fall flat, not because it lacks magnificent qualities, but because the difficulties of production are too great. In his opinion, the drama staged some years ago by the Theatre Guild as The Tidings Brought to Mary is the one in which Claudel has best conformed with the various technical requirements of the theatre.

In parting, Copeau spoke highly of the actors among whom he had worked here, admiring their eagerness and serious devotion, but hoping that the tendency to expand and to prosper would not inspire a tendency to flabbiness. If there was something of professorial commendation in these words, there was nothing academic in the man who uttered them. Jacques Copeau's mind and face are those of a man who must live and die in the atmosphere of drama.

Thoughts for a Young Girl

Fold and pack away
Your lilac-scented dress,
Not again shall spring
Be a warm caress.

Not again syringas
Shall have so sweet a smell
Nor shall you walk the path
Where petals fell.

O cruel spring! Listen
To one who stands apart,
Walk gently, walk lightly
On a young girl's heart.

BORGHILD LUNDBERG LEE.

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THE PLAY

By R. DANA SKINNER

Saturday's Children

MAXWELL ANDERSON is the author of the first play presented by the re-reorganized Actors' Theatre under the directorship of Guthrie McClintic. Those who think of Mr. Anderson in terms of Outside Lookin' In, or as co-author of the stormy What Price Glory?, will be surprised to see themselves witnessing a quiet comedy of manners among the $40.00 a week toilers—a comedy replete with human and humane touches, bristling with dialogue so true that it hurts, and displaying with rich understanding the mole-hill tragedies of those who remain petulant children long after their time. There will be less surprise at finding moments of brutal and quite unnecessary frankness in the dialogue, the acceptance of birth control as a matter-of-fact institution, a scattering of that theatrical profanity which throws doubt on the author's sincerity, and a total misconception of the finer things contributing to successful marriage. In brief, it is a play of decidedly mixed values.

And right here we might as well face the difference between a sappy and turgid play which "points a moral," and the play which simply impresses us with its truth to human experience. Human nature was not born yesterday, and there has surely never been a generation which did not believe that "times are changing." But a little sane observation is able to detect the difference between the forces of nature governing actions, the permanent truths, and the surface customs which we salute or despise as "the times." Mr. Anderson's play undoubtedly reflects the surface opinions of today, but it does not carry them to a conclusion. It carries them only to the point of a somewhat cynical question mark—a temporary solution of the problem of two young married people which, one believes rather sadly, can lead only to disaster because it rests on illusion rather than solid reality. There is nothing, for example, in the whole play, to indicate that the successful union of two souls may rest on more than sex and romantic love, or that the more primitive instincts may have their controlling parallel in a plane of richer understanding, tolerance and the true freedom springing from profound respect. There is no understanding of the fact that this freedom and the protection of individuality in marriage come from a delicately adjusted inner attitude; nor of the great paradox that freedom discovers itself only in apparent surrender.

Aside from this basic aspect of the play itself, a real tribute is due to Mr. McClintic as director and to the individual members of the cast for a surpassingly natural, smooth and often poignant performance. The growing supremacy of Mr. McClintic's work seems to lie in bringing out precisely this quality of naturalness in his actors, a quality as replete with the fine arts of restraint and minor business as it is gratifying in its apparent simplicity. Ruth Gordon has never appeared more convincingly a human being, and surely never so fine an artist. Ruth Hammond attains a fine directness and absence of stagey quality which bring her spontaneous recognition from the audience. Roger Pryor is excellent as the distracted young husband. In fact, every member of the cast stands forth individually without in the least detracting from a smooth and finished ensemble. The only disappointment is the play itself—allowing, of course, for its many splendid moments, but appraised, as it should be, in its misleading entirety.

Yours Truly

GENE BUCK, having left the Ziegfeld organization to stage reviews on his own account, now presents us with some mediocre music of Raymond Hubbell, a sketchy and near-melodramatic book by Clyde North, and the sustaining antics of Leon Errol. The name of Yours Truly is selected because Mr. Errol plays the part of one Truly "from nowhere in particular," or perhaps for any one of three dozen other equally important reasons.

If one confesses to long periods of boredom in what is intended for an opulent musical show, part of the blame must be assigned to Mr. Errol himself. He will always be amusing for five minutes—as long as it takes him to make his entry and pull his one stunt of the faltering leg. But that leg has been seen countless times before, and is now good for just those five minutes and no more. After that, one waits patiently and disappointedly for signs of the true comic genius. They do not appear. After one has discounted some sentimental singing by a tall blonde named Marion Harris, and some miniature Fanny Brice comedy by Ina Williams, there are only the incomparable Tiller girls to sharpen up the performance to first calibre. The impeccable rhythm of those young ladies from England may not be new to Broadway theatre-goers, but it is a never-ending joy.

Bye Bye Bonnie

DOROTHY BURGESS, who shyly crept into New York's heart some months ago in a comedy known as The Adorable Liar, is now the bright and particular star of the musical comedy, Bye Bye Bonnie, with a passable book by Louis Simon and Bide Dudley, and some colorful bright music by Albert Von Tilzer. There is also a deal of sprightly dancing in this piece, some thoroughly amusing situations and a chance for Louis Simon himself to do his best as Noah Z. Shrivel, the soft-soap manufacturer and ex-Puritan who lands in jail on a charge of bootlegging and forthwith capitalizes this episode by becoming a wet candidate for Congress. There is also Lottice Howell, recently of Deep River, and worth considerable attention on her own account.

But it is distinctly Miss Burgess who brings to this bit of nonsense its special charm. She is, with the possible exception of some of the talent in Mr. Ames's Gilbert and Sullivan troupe, quite the freshest, most natural and unspoiled little prima donna who has smiled on Broadway in many moons.

Damn the Tears

AS THIS expressionistic play by William Gaston has already run its short life, it deserves only a word of high praise for the interesting settings by Norman Bel Geddes, and the following epitaph: an expressionistic drama which tries to make us look through the eyes of a dementia praecox patient is doomed to commercial failure! We are not interested in seeing the mind of a man who retreats, practically without struggle, from hard realities to a dream world of his own. It is the antithesis of heroism. Instead of being tragic it is merely pitiful. No matter how true it may ring in the ears of a physician, it is material for the laboratory rather than the stage.

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POEMS

Calle de Lamparillas

(Havana, Cuba)

It is a little street, and very humbly
It winds through the quarter on the harbor-front;
All day odors of spices and cordage
And fruits fragrant and decaying,
Cloy its murky atmosphere;
But at night the harbor winds
Rush through it with a rustle
That makes my heart stand still;
Then it grows fresh and cool as the memory
Of a wise old friend who is dead.

On either side, the little houses
Jostle so close that sunshine
Rarely touches more than their eaves.
There are deep shadows by noontide
At the entrances and windows,
Although the wheat and flour warehouses
Whiten the road and carts and workmen,
So that they seem at some travesty of Pierrot
As they labor under their loads.
There is a burr of Spanish—Asturian
And Galician, rather than Castilian—
But by night, silence—loneliness—
Nothingness—Where are the little lamps
Of old, and the fair fingers that hung them forth?—
Gone!—Oh, light me your candle, Pierrot, again!

THOMAS WALSH.

Earth-Canonized

This is high saintliness, I know:
To love earth's sacramental snow;

To float face toward the sky and make
Clerestory of a sapphire lake;

To cling all day to wave-wracked hulls
Hearing the antiphon of gulls;

To tell, amid green rocks and weeds,
Decades of periwinkle beads;

Earth's saints are those who to the last
Cling to beauty's broken mast,

Then striking boldly seaward, reach
The smooth-stoned slope of heaven's beach.

HENRY MORTON ROBINSON.

Madonna

Clasped to your heart He seems secure
While sun and moon and stars endure—
Yet in the shadow of your eyes,
What apprehended Calvaries!

MEDORA C. ADDISON.

'Tis I Am Rich

What matter if the slow exhaustless stream
Of lofty thought and hope
And sweet, high-hearted dream,
That springs forever from a heaven-watered heart,
Squander its bounties on a barren slope,
Vanish in scorchéd sand
In a wasted land?
'Tis I am rich, and bitter poor thou art!

What matter if from out the boundless store
Of heaven-minted gold
I lavish more and more
The Coins of Christ on yon poor miser-heart?
What profit if I should withhold
These Coins that bear His Seal and Sign?
There is no bottom in Golgotha's mine.
'Tis I am rich, and bitter poor thou art!

What matter if a false unskilful foe,
Worsted in tournament,
Split his false blade? What though
I gave him then my sword to pierce my heart?
What though he struck, and deep it went?
The hilt and handguard made a jeweled cross.
Did my blood darken it? . . . Love knew no loss!
'Tis I am rich, and bitter poor thou art!

ELIZABETH CASE.

Mundane

Dagger flash will always be
Close about the earth and sea.
Bright the bane of tiger eyes
In the width of wide world lies.
All the deep accents of breath,
All the fantasies of death,
Are initialed underneath
Devious surmise.

Earthworm's wriggling dust-bound length
Rears to fire-fanged dragon strength.
Chloris on a sagging stair
Calls the leopard from his lair.
Atlantis rises half awash,
Stones of empires slide and crash,
Where the grey shears meet and slash
Obliquely unaware.

H. C. BARROWES-DONALD.

Ecce Ancilla Domini

Emblem, Mary, of your virginity—
A lily from God's Fields in Paradise
The Angel offered you on bended knee—
You bloomed beneath the message of his eyes. . . .
Raising the lily like a sword he stood
And drew about your head a golden glow—
Your Halo is your Crown—O Maidenhood—
Your heart a flame beneath a veil of snow!

JESSIE LEMONT.

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COMMUNICATIONS

KOSCIUSZKO: A LITHUANIAN

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor:—In The Commonweal of December 29, 1926, there appeared an article of mine entitled Kosciuszko: A Lithuanian. In your issue of January 12, there was a communication from Mr. Stephen B. Mizwa, in which the writer stated that he was at a loss to understand what I meant when I said that Kosciuszko was a Lithuanian. Mr. Mizwa's letter itself furnishes the explanation of his bewilderment, for it betrays in the writer a palpable lack of knowledge of Lithuanian history. Lithuania was never a province of Poland. It is true that in Kosciuszko's time there existed between Poland and Lithuania a union "aequales aequalibus," designed solely for the greater protection of these countries against the danger of invasion by more powerful neighbors; and when Kosciuszko, as commander-in-chief of the united forces, on March 24, 1794, issued a proclamation, it was addressed to the military forces of Poland and Lithuania. Kosciuszko then, as he did on other occasions, clearly drew a distinction between the two nations.

Indeed, Poland and Lithuania are, and always have been, entirely different and distinct nations—racially, linguistically, and culturally. Your correspondent in one breath asserts that it is impossible to be a Lithuanian without being at the same time a Pole, and in the next breath, he asks: "Do you suppose that if Kosciuszko were a Lithuanian, racially and culturally, he would have become the national hero of Poland, and have been regarded as Poland's greatest patriot?" My answer to that is that it matters not what Mr. Mizwa or the writer might suppose; the important thing is that Kosciuszko himself, in letters and documents, made the unqualified statement that he was a Lithuanian—notable when he wrote to General Niesiolowski: "What am I, if not a Lithuanian?" And to Alexander I of Russia, he wrote: "I am a Lithuanian born!"

As to his having become the national hero of Poland, history leaves no room for doubt on that score, the "touchiness of the Poles on the point of nationalism" notwithstanding. It might well be, of course, that the Poles of that time were not as narrow and prejudiced racially as Mr. Mizwa's statement would indicate.

Again, in The Commonweal of January 26, Reverend Francis Jablowski says that Kosciuszko's description of himself in his will, as "a native of Lithuania in Poland," solves the question of the great patriot's nationality and makes him, willy-nilly, a Pole. Kosciuszko in his will, and in every other document and letter in which he referred to his nativity, described himself as a Lithuanian, and that he should have described Lithuania as "in Poland," could not and did not make him a Pole, for Poland and Lithuania are entirely different nations.

I might point out that the famous Polish writer, Sienkiewicz, like other famous Poles, was born and died in a time when Poland was a province of Russia; yet no Russian has ever attempted to "steal Poland's ideals" by claiming that Sienkiewicz was a Russian, although there might appear to be some justice in such a claim, since not only was Poland a province of Russia at that time, but both were of the same Slavic group. Lithuania, on the other hand, does not belong to the Slavic group.

Your correspondent is emphatic in declaring that "we [Poles] will not let anybody steal our own ideals." This shows a commendable spirit; but by what right do the Poles steal the ideals of Lithuania, as witness their Kosciuszko claim? It could only be by the same process of reasoning as that employed by the African Negro who, when questioned by a missionary as to his ideas of justice, replied that for him to take the wife and goods of his neighbor was just, but that for the neighbor to take his wife and goods was unjust.

Father Jablowski's statement that my article was "distasteful," that Kosciuszko "studied in Wilno" (?), that "we had Lithuanians from the beginning" (?), that "we [Poles] try to live in peace with everybody" (?), "we are Catholics," "Kosciuszko's picture is honored in every Polish home the same as the pictures of the saints," etc., afford no proof that Kosciuszko was a Pole. Historical documents prove that Kosciuszko was a Lithuanian, and no mere words uttered by anyone now can alter that fact.

REV. JOSEPH B. KONCEVICIUS.

THE MERCURY SCHOOL AND METHODISTS

Boston, Mass.

TO the Editor:—Because Mencken and the Mercury school of writers unmercifully maul the Methodists and Baptists on all occasions, certain Catholics seem to think it smart to copy the Mercury style when referring to the activities of these sects. Mencken has made the word "moron" fashionable—meaning Methodist or Baptist; and I have seen some use of the word in somewhat the same sense in the recent writings of Catholics.

Now when the diabolical school of writers in France or elsewhere attack the Catholic Church, there are certain non-Catholics who seem unmistakably glad, not realizing that an attack upon the Catholic Church is an attack upon Christianity in general, and that the same hand that smites Catholicism today will surely smite Protestantism tomorrow—if the smiting seems worth while.

This foolishness on the part of Protestants has often been commented upon in suitable words by the Catholic press; but does it not seem just as foolish for our publicists to gloat over the bitterness of the Mercury's attacks upon Methodism? This anti-Protestantism does not connote any special love for or sympathy with Catholicism. Not at all. The same sneers now directed at the "morons" of Methodism will surely be flung at the members of the Catholic Church in due time. Gleeful imitations of the ultra-liberal style of berating the heretic are not going to save us from the poison pen when the moment is ripe. It simply so happens that the Methodists are associated at present with prohibition and other activities which are extremely distasteful to the "liberal" group. But the prohibition of liquor is not the only prohibition likely to fall under their displeasure, and the Catholic Church, standing as it does for prohibitions of various kinds which are just as irksome to certain natures as the prohibition of liquor, cannot expect to escape the attacks of the "wide open" brigade for any great length of time.

A review in a recent issue of The Commonweal, written by Robert R. Hull (a convert to the Church, I believe) is an example of the evil effect upon our writers of the Mercury and its contributors. Mr. Hull deliberately copies the Mercury way of writing and the Mercury attitude toward the Methodists. He seems very happy doing this, more especially in

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dragging into his review mention of one chapter which, when it appeared last year in the Mercury, was the cause of much controversy over its decency or indecency.

Of course, this is very smart. But I respectfully contend that it is not courteous, nor is it wise. Of course, someone may answer: "But the Methodists are not courteous in their controversy with us, and the Methodist denomination furnishes the bulk of those who belong to the Ku Klux Klan." Even if this were so, what are we going to gain by patting on the back and slavishly imitating the people who attack those who, with all their faults, are still much nearer to us in belief than the writers whose sneers at all religion, all supernaturalism, are notorious?

DENIS A. MCCARTHY.

EXISTING ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES

Jackson, Ohio.

TO the Editor:—I must confess a reluctance to debate with anyone who finds a satisfaction in having anyone convict him of bad logic and triumphantly declares that he has "pinked" me when I protested against such an irrational procedure. If there is any glory in such tactics, Father Maguire is welcome to it.

But obviously it is of little value in a discussion of a present-day ethical problem to have valuable space used in criticizing logic. True, it is the basis of argumentation but when the participants refuse to recognize that foundation and to be guided thereby, it is almost futile to comment further on it. Suffice to say that Father Maguire has sadly misunderstood my analogies in my letter in The Commonweal of November 17, and despite my protest that all criticisms of our present economic order are out of place in this discussion, he insists upon injecting it again and again. So, too, with Miss Church, in her letter in The Commonweal of December 15. I shall be delighted, once this discussion has been concluded, to then consider the evils of the order which are responsible for the sad situation which I have presented. I, too, have criticisms to offer of that system, but must request that Father Maguire and anyone else discussing the present ethical problem please confine their remarks to that one phase, and not indulge in criticism entirely beside the question. Only by this can we accomplish what we wish, and prevent the discussion from being shunted into a maze of irrelevant ideas.

Furthermore, Father Maguire's analogy of a diamond worth $1,000 which can only find a market at $100 is a perfect illustration of his theory of economic value. It is distinctly different from mine, and, I may say, that of every recognized economist. I maintain that its use is false in this connection for if the diamond can only be sold for $100 that is its value! The same condition obtains by hypothesis in the problem presented. The employer is not offering to pay his men any less than their labor is worth, but exactly what it is worth! So that analogy is futile and illustrates nothing.

Passing over the rest of Father Maguire's and Miss Church's remarks, however, let us, for the sake of clarity and brevity, now sum up the opinions expressed so far in this discussion: Miss Church maintains the position of "a living wage or no wage at all." Applying this doctrine to the claim made by Father Maguire that there are many persons in this country who do not receive a living wage (10,000,000 is the estimate of Secretary of Labor Davis) all these persons should be laid off simply because they are not receiving a living wage, if the employers cannot or will not pay that living wage. This is one view. The next is Father Maguire's admission that a wage cut is permissible in this case if there is a reasonable hope that the industry will soon be able to pay a living wage. This is a compromise between Miss Church's dogma and my own contention that a wage cut is justifiable regardless of the future hopes for better times. Father Maguire thereby makes the morality of a present act contingent upon an economic hope. I wonder what our Catholic moralists will say to this? I for one have never been taught that the morality of any immediate act can be made contingent upon some future possibility. If good faith on the part of the employer is in question, we need not consider any further, for the only problem he is trying to decide is his duty to his men, with no consideration of his own interest outside of his desire to preserve his investment if ethically possible. Shall he close his plant and leave his men to their own devices (and by hypothesis, these are few and inadequate) or shall he pay them what he can until they can arrange to do better somewhere else or conditions change, enabling the employer to pay them more? To sum up our views then, Miss Church maintains that the first alternative is the only moral one, I maintain that the second is more in keeping with the principles of Christian charity, and Father Maguire supports my view "with reservations."

So the discussion stands, with no other views expressed, for Father Spalding's letter is merely a protest against the problem being used as a criticism of the doctrine of the living wage. Even though it may surprise Father Maguire, I am heartily in favor of seeing that every man receives a living wage according to his accepted and expressed definition before others are entitled to luxuries. Possibly this statement will put at rest the doubts Father Spalding has of my intention in raising the question in the beginning.

I still feel like Diogenes, however, for I am still looking for the ethical yardstick of a fair wage and it seems as elusive as that famous philosopher's honest man. The one doubt I have never entertained is that of Father Maguire's sincerity. If I had I should have told him so personally and plainly. At least we have our sincerity in common!

STEPHEN DU BRUL.

THE FACTS OF FASCISM

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor:—Referring to Father Bandini's letter in your issue of January 19, I would respectfully recall to his attention the following words uttered by His Holiness Pope Pius XI, reported by the Associated Press and published in the United States on December 20:

"We declare pointedly that so far as religious interests, which are the supreme interests of the people, are concerned, the faith in the force of right, in the vigor of laws, in the efficacious good will of the authorities—is not yet complete or secure.

"It seems that an obscure menace—confirmed by clouds of suspicion, interferences, and difficulties—hovers over the activities of the 'Catholic action organization,' which is the apple of our eye. It seems the task of the education of Christian youth, which is an important part of our divine mission, is endangered. We again see a conception of the state making headway which is not a Catholic conception because it makes the state an end unto itself and citizens mere means to that end, absorbing and monopolizing everything."

REV. JOHN A. RYAN.

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BOOKS

Political and Industrial Democracy: 1776-1926, by W. Jett Lauck. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company. $2.00.

JETT LAUCK does not write of Mars. The dates in the subtitle set the action in a familiar scene, and the emphasis upon industrial democracy in relation to political democracy hints at once at the theme and the tempo. That all men should enjoy approximately equal opportunity is the traditional idea underlying political democracy, and this is Mr. Lauck's general standard for sound relations in industry. Industrial democracy is held up as the means the industrialized people of the United States must adopt to gain for themselves the equal opportunity which the early American self-ruling farmer-democrat enjoyed when a continent of free land lay before him.

Industrial democracy has been the theme of many a book. Mr. Lauck approaches it, however, with the supposition that it includes the right of property ownership. He, moreover, relies greatly upon practical experimentation and upon the growth of industrial democracy through the force of successful examples.

To the communist this book is, of course, anathema. To the equally extreme upholder of industrial autocracy, it is, equally of course, anathema. But most other people will agree with the main outlines of its thesis. Even the socialist, now that he has overturned his old landmarks of an intransigent class war and universal common ownership will find much to admire in it. The trade-unionist of the newer school will strain at the high praise given the Philadelphia Mitten Plan even though the failure to deal with the union is condemned. Possibly the Catholic searcher for industrial justice and equity will like the book most of all, although he, too, will find points to add or substract. It is remarkable how close a similarity there is between Mr. Lauck's thesis and the main thesis of the Bishops' Program of Social Reconstruction which Mr. Lauck himself quotes very early in his text.

More than half of the volume is given over to a description of present-day approaches to industrial democracy in particular concerns and to an analysis of these plans in relation to the author's conception of industrial democracy. Most of them he excludes as examples of industrial autocracy even though often animated by a mild benevolence.

His attitude toward the Mitten Plan of the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company is the touchstone of his theory. After describing it along with numerous other plans including union-management coöperation, and the Nash, Dutchess Bleachery, and Filene Plans as well as others that fall definitely outside of his idea of industrial democracy, he returns to it and measures it against certain requirements of industrial democracy which he has already explained.

He condemns the Mitten Plan for not being based upon collective bargaining with a standard labor-union. He praises it for being ready to so deal when the employees agree upon a union to represent them. He adds, however, the recommendation that herein the management should take the initiative as did, for example, "Golden Rule" Nash. With this same qualification he praises the method of choosing the employee representatives who deal with the management and their control of their organization funds. The wage scale he considers adequate for conductors and motormen, but not for those lower than they. Within the limits of a basic wage he praises the method of modifying money wages in accord with changes in the cost of living. Working conditions and the control of welfare work, again with the qualification regarding union representation, are considered satisfactory.

For the rest he has nothing but praise and herein, along with union recognition, are found the main lines of his idea. For him the Mitten Plan exemplifies his idea of employee-management coöperation in economies and efficiency; of the division between them of part of the money so gained after capital stock receives dividends; of the return of the remaining profits in some form to the public; of employees purchasing common stock with their share of the profits; of their holding of this stock through their own trustees so as to unite its strength; of their representation upon the directorate; of their practical control of the company through the ownership of a great deal of the voting stock; of the collecting of new capital by direct sale of securities to customers so as to avoid the investment bankers; and of their ownership of a coöperative bank.

Strangely, Mr. Lauck says nothing of the American Federation of Labor's manifesto of 1923, Industry's Manifest Duty, or of the place occupied by labor's coöperative banks, insurance companies, and investment companies in the gradual trend toward industrial democracy. The consumers' coöperative movement likewise deserves analysis. So, too, does the status of public ownership in relation to industrial democracy. One would like also to see a consideration of the practical possibilities of turning employee representation plans, including the Mitten one, into the stream of the organized labor movement. There is still another gap. Assuming that the union controls the machinery of dealing with the employer, is organized labor willing to adopt the ideas of the Mitten Plan, and, if so, under what conditions?

R. A. McGOWAN.

Tar, by Sherwood Anderson. New York: Boni and Liveright. $3.00.

WHEN Mr. Anderson published A Story-Teller's Story a couple of years ago, I, for one, believed that he had at last escaped from adolescence and was about to accomplish what he so often seemed to be on the very verge of doing. Once, and once only, up to that time had he completely succeeded, and that was in his marvelous short story, I'm a Fool.

Since a Story-Teller's Story, however, Mr. Anderson has suffered a relapse. Dark Laughter was, to be sure, not positively silly in the manner of Many Marriages, but it was equally humorless in its factitious sexuality, and even, at its crisis, less convincing. We may pass over the naïveté of Sherwood Anderson's Notebook, published last year. It is only another instance of an artist who is uncertain about his own method trying to find his range by commenting upon the art of other people.

Tar, which bears the subtitle of A Midwest Childhood, is another autobiography, and a much less successful one than A Story-Teller's Story. In the earlier book, Mr. Anderson was chiefly concerned with his own literary development and with his own ideas. About these he said many striking things and managed—though the book had a wider range than Tar—to draw order, and beauty at times, out of the chaos of his plan.

Again his genial shiftless Southern father, his kindly Italian mother, and his brothers appear; but somehow they are not quite so interesting as they once were. By a long way the most powerful part of the book is the thirteenth chapter. It is a story of an old woman who was going home, accompanied by her dogs, and carrying a piece of salt pork, a piece of liver, some dog meat and some soup bones. On the way she perished

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in the cold. And the dogs, to whom the ancient spirit of their wolfish ancestors returned, having waited for her to die, dragged her body out into the open clearing, and, in order to get at the meat in the pack the old woman was carrying, stripped her body naked to the hips. It was found two days later, frozen and slight, and looking the body of a young girl. Mr. Anderson imagines the scene grimly.

What is the matter with Mr. Anderson? Let him speak: "And now for a confession. I have a love of confessions. I do not remember the face of my own father. My wife is in the next room as I sit writing, but I do not remember what she looks like. My wife is to me an idea, my mother, my sons, my friends, are ideas." I believe the confession to be true and to be one that explains a great deal. Mr. Anderson never actually deals with life, but with his idea of life. And that idea is that "life" and "sex" are interchangeable terms. This is what he has in his mind when he uses a phrase such as "rancid with life." But it leads him to misunderstand the nature of both life and sex, and consequently ruins a man who should be, but who most certainly is not, a very remarkable artist.

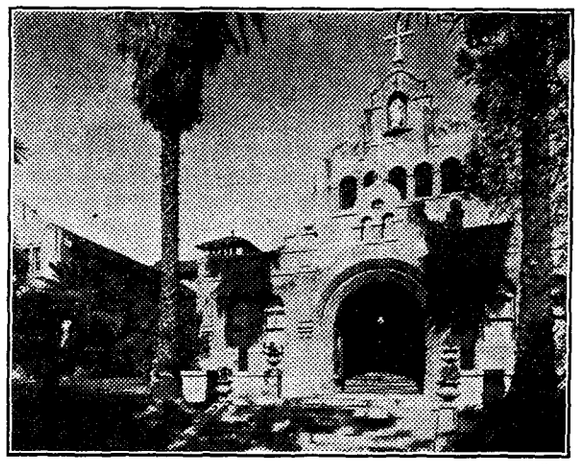
The artist in him, I believe, divines as much. Let him speak again: "Manhood, sophistication is something worth striving for, but innocence is something sweeter. It may be the greater wisdom to remain innocent but it cannot be done. I wish it could." Therefore Mr. Anderson translates his wistful love of innocence into the terms of his midwestern puritan horror of sex, and because he is torn between this and his love for "life," his "rancid life," his idea of life, a ruinous havoc is played with his "art."

THEODORE MAYNARD.

Anatole France: The Degeneration of a Great Artist, by Barry Cerf. New York: Lincoln MacVeagh, The Dial Press. $4.00.

THIS is a book which will be bitterly attacked. Indeed it already has been. And the qualities which it possesses which have called forth the attacks, are precisely those which make it distinctive in this age of slipshod thinking, and egoistic criticism. It is perhaps the first work in English to make an exhaustive analysis of both the spirit and matter of Anatole France, and at the same time to dare to test them at the touchstone of the aesthetic and moral standards which have been accepted by the Christian world. It is not too much to assert that despite a certain lack in the dramatic assembling of his points, Professor Cerf has written a study which no serious student of literature can afford to miss.

Professor Cerf is no lukewarm admirer of the art of Anatole France. He acknowledges his charm, his lucidity, his range of general knowledge, his power of pictorial creation, but he puts them in their place, and separates them from qualities which the world has been taught that France possessed but which in reality were not his. He shows, for instance, that while France was lucid he was not simple, and that far from being a lover of the golden mean of the classic age, he was in reality always extravagant—"extravagantly sceptical; extravagantly the pure artist, impressionist, dilettante; and later, alternately extravagantly socialistic, and extravagantly cynical." Moreover he proves his lack of tolerance and kindliness, once he had passed the youthful era of his Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard, and he denies to him the term of "humanist," as the true humanist is neither sentimental nor derisive, and France was both. Professor Cerf finds the basis of France's anti-religious



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philosophy, and indeed the basis of all his later writings, in his profound and unmitigated sensuality, even his partisanship of Dreyfus being due largely to his intrigue with Madame de Caillavet, a Jewess, and to the fact that the Catholic party was found in the other camp. It has been argued that France himself made no bones about his sensuality, and therefore it ought to be accepted at once, but the fact of the matter is, as Professor Cerf points out, that sensuality which is unrestrained is the mother of a whole line of other vices which cannot fail to impair the artistic importance of any writer.

The position which Anatole France is to occupy in the history of the world's literature will not, of course, be affected by the books which any man or group of men may write upon the subject. Time alone will set his place, whether it is to be among the immortals or the dilettantes. Professor Cerf believes, and many of us believe with him, that it will be among the latter, and in that belief he has written a study at once scholarly and brilliantly expressed. The true interest, at least for us Americans, lies in the fact that here is a new critic who has the qualities in which American criticism is at present notoriously lacking—balance, seriousness of purpose, a willingness to burrow deep and avoid the merely facile, a wide knowledge not only of contemporary, but of past literature. Added to this the fact that he has a style at once graceful and epigrammatic, he is a man who ought to prove a force in a future not far away. What he still needs to attain is a somewhat less diffuse presentation of his facts and a greater climatic power. When he has obtained the former, the latter will undoubtedly follow.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

The Catholic Tradition in English Literature, edited by George Carver. New York: Doubleday, Page and Company. $1.80.

Representative Catholic Essays, edited by George Carver and Ellen M. Geyer. New York: The Macmillan Company. $1.75.

PROFESSOR CARVER'S anthology of Catholic passages from English and American literature is about as good an indication of what riches have been accumulated as one could reasonably expect. Textual difficulties seem to have precluded reprints from pre-Chaucerian poetry and prose—an omission that may be regretted but which could not easily be remedied. Because the era dealt with is, then, essentially that of the diaspora, it is hard to see how rigid tests of orthodoxy can be successfully employed. To say that Pope's Essay on Man is Catholic (when as a matter of fact it is more than a little deistic) and then to proceed to admit that Ruskin never had a Catholic thing to declare, is to make a distinction that in practice remains impossible. Precisely because there is a difference between an author and his work, between the sins of Verlaine and the poetry of Verlaine, it seems to me that many of the best evidences of a living Catholic tradition in English letters have been omitted from this book. Critically it should also be added that there is plenty of room to quarrel with the selections. Why there should be twelve pages of Father Abram Ryan and not a single line from Brownson is more than I can understand. But all such details are best left out of court. It is the anthologist's business to determine what he shall put into his limited space, and his good fortune if he pleases others than himself. No doubt, Professor Carver's book will please many.

I wish as much could honestly be said for Representative Catholic Essays, but it is an utterly mid-Victorian collection. Since all the selections were obviously made for the benefit of school-children, the title is clearly a misnomer. There are distinguished pages, of course—names which have appeared in every kind of anthology see to that—but the total effect is as grandmotherly as a series of unctuous pamphlets. If this be representative Catholic thought, then all of us have been asleep for twenty-five years. It is one thing to give people "something helpful to read": it is another to offer a book which presumes to characterize achievement in the essay form. Besides, I can't help thinking that all this endeavor to isolate relatively homiletic Catholic literature from the whole current of English expression is poor pedagogy. Newman's views on the point have never been successfully disputed and it is too late to begin the refutation now. That one should proudly call attention to Catholic letters goes without saying. But those who are impressed with Thompson's Shelley can hardly overlook altogether the fact that he read Shelley.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER.

Stepchildren of Music, by Eric Blom. New York: The Dial Press. $2.50.

THIS is a curious hybrid; original, to say the least, and with as much useless information as a telephone directory. Nor would one be wide of the mark in venturing the estimate that there are as many step- and illegitimate children of music (minor or neglected works of famous composers) as there are names in the local 'phone directory. We all know that every recognized work of art represents but the peak of innumerable and forgotten works of less or no value, all of which sought to express what is consummated in the chrysalis: to what purpose, then, could they be brought to light? Mr. Blom attempts to answer this question with his book. As he writes in his introduction:

"Let us do justice to the minor artist, and allow him to please us, if he can; let us, likewise, be irreverent enough to divert ourselves by contemplating the indiscretions of the great. It is amusing to watch the youthful Rossini fumbling with a medium that does not suit him, or Samuel Butler dabbling in one not properly his own; but it is also agreeable to see Liszt discarding all shallow mannerism when he sets out to give us of his best in a work which few care to know; it is instructive to follow Cherubini, Roussel, Delius, Strauss, or Bartok into one particular field of their art in which they may or may not be at home, or to observe Arnold Bax unlocking the rusty padlocks of a gate leading into one that has long lain fallow; it is wholesome to witness the tragedy of explorers like Chabrier and Pedrell, who were broken, the one by misunderstanding, and the other by a strenuousness of labor that defeated its own ends; and it is useful to discover the causes of the rapid downfall of a Serov, or of the neglect of a work like Elgar's Falstaff."

This fairly bristles with apology: having read the book, I can pass on the information that it (the apology, not the book) was not uncalled for. Mr. Blom's interests are wearying, sometimes as obviously affected as is the pedantic cloak he occasionally hurries into to disguise the essentially dilettantish turn of his mind. As with so much contemporary British writing on music, I found myself studying the writer rather than the subject of his monograph, so awkward, so seemingly unnatural is the flow of their views. Literary facility seems to be more prized by British music criticism in general than that abiding and beautiful instinct of their Gallic neighbors: lucidity. If Mr. Blom would lose some of that "literary sophistica-

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tion" which he so sweepingly charges César Frank with lacking, he might come into some of that great mystic's intuition —which is as necessary for true criticism as for creation. I read, for instance, all Mr. Blom's fine words on Bela Bartok's quartets, but nothing came to me.

WALTER V. ANDERSON.

Turkey, by Arnold J. Toynbee and Kenneth P. Kirkwood. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.00.

THIS is one of the latest volumes of the Modern World Series, ably edited by the Right Honorable H. A. L. Fisher to give the reader an understanding of nations as they are today. It is hoped that the series will help demolish that habit of personification as applied to nations—Walter Lippman has defined it clearly and admirably—that habit which stands out as one of the major causes of all international misunderstanding and which causes perfectly well-meaning persons to say, "France, Great Britain, Germany have this plan or this other plan," when the fact which comes to their notice pertains to the extremely limited politics of an extremely limited and highly diversified political class acting for good or evil above and apart from the French, the Germans, or the English.

The political tradition of Turkey has misunderstood itself more thoroughly and has been misunderstood to an extent greater than is the case of any other people. All the more refreshing is this book's clear account of the long historical attempt to build up and control an ill-assorted empire of subject, irreductible races; the breakdown of this effort after the general war; the new perception of nationality in the western sense; the survival of the Turkish national unit and the new and violent iconoclastic republican venture. What a break with the immediate Byronic past. Mustapha Kemal, a figure of the French Revolution yet far less sanguinary, driving the ill-counseled Greeks into the sea, dismissing the Sultan, dismissing the Caliph and with him Turkey's traditional leadership of the Moslem world—setting up a secular western government, importing Fordson tractors, doing away with fez and mosque, refusing foreign credits and control—the leader of a fanatical attempt to give new and logical life to the Turkish people. Whether he can ensure continuity to this effort remains to be seen and is doubtful. The authors put the question and time alone can answer it—yet all the western world will watch intently for that answer for in it may be reflected the response of the East to the challenge of our civilization.

GOUVERNEUR PAULDING.

History's Most Famous Words, by Mrs. Chetwood Smith. Boston: Lee and Shepard Company. $2.50.

THE historian is apt to look askance at history's most famous sayings: so many of them have been inspired after the event and display their "si non e vero e ben trovato." Yet the idea of collecting 200 of them in an anthology picture-book, each projected against the relief of its motivating story, should make a popular appeal or, as the summary so elegantly paraphrases this idea, "give welcome culture in its most acceptable form." It is easier to criticize the choice of contents of an anthology of this kind than to improve on it, yet too many of the "famous words" included in this one are too little known generally to appear to deserve the adjective. The two-page story miniatures in which each "famous word" caps the climax are nicely told and with a sense for the dramatic. No doubt they serve their purpose, one of popularization, far better than

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if presented in the exquisite literate stylization of a miniaturist such as Marcel Schwob, for example.

To return once more to the matter of choice of famous phrases, however, it seems as though here and there it might be improved upon. The words, "It is the dream of my heart's sorrow shaped in marble," used by Shah Jehan, are neither more nor less apocryphal than "Let me be buried beside my wife in the Taj-Mahal," and they are more poetic. And is the smug cynicism of a Barnum, "I'll believe in the mermaid and I'll hire it" fit company for Nathan Hale's "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country"? To show Du Barry's triumph over royalty in the shape of Louis XV of France we have the phrase, at her court presentation, "You have lost your wager, Sire!" and the admission that "we do not know what the wager was." Far more typical of all she was and meant were the words spoken at one of those petits soupers at Luciennes when to Louis, rebuking her for drinking from the punch-ladle and replunging it in the bowl, she replied: "Eh bien, je veux que tout le monde boive mon crachat!"

Yet, though in various other instances, as in the case of Francis I, we feel his "Woman is changeable" would have been far more characteristic than his "All is lost save honor," since he very definitely lost his honor not long after Pavia by breaking his word, all in all the author must be praised for a breadth of choice which often rises from battle's earthy word of power to the higher phrases of spiritual inspiration. It is not all: "Up Guards, and at 'em!" and "I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer!" We have Sainte Jeanne d'Arc's triumphant "My voices truly come from heaven"; the invocation from Saint Francis's sermon to the birds; Constantine's apostrophe to the Cross. Picturesquely written, the book should stimulate the general reader's interest in history as a whole. The half-tones of famous paintings add to its attractiveness.

FREDERICK H. MARTENS.

Caxton, by Nelle Slayton Aurner. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. $6.00.

AVOIDING comparisons with the able works of William Blades and E. Gordon Duff, the author of this new volume devotes himself to the study of Caxton as an "author and editor: to examine the works he selected to print and, through them, to gain more knowledge of one of the least understood periods of English literature."

Dr. Aurner's story of Caxton's beginnings is summed up in a probable birth-year in London in 1421, and a discarding of the portraits that have been accepted as his without proper authority.

Chief among Caxton's patrons was Lord Rivers, the brother of Edward IV's queen: he is described in The Secret History of Burgundy as "the handsomest man living," and Sir Thomas More speaks of him as "a right honorable man, as valiante of hand as politik in counsayle." This chivalrous gentleman, famous for his joustings and pilgrimages, collected and translated books from the continent, and gave his works for printing to the care of Caxton: they range from Les dits moraux de philosophes, and Christyne, and Cordyale, to "diverse balades ayenst the seven dedely synnes," and were printed before 1479. There were other famous authors on the Caxton list: Gower, with his Confessio Amantis and the Pilgrimage of the Soul; the first and second editions of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales (1478-1484); and numerous Latin works of religious doctrine and devotion.

Dr. Aurner brings a wealth of illustrative matter to present the culture as well as the historical events of Caxton's lifetime: its keen interest in the fables of antiquity; its love of the contemplative life; its morals and manners; the efforts for spiritual edification through the lives of the saints; the pioneer teachings of science and scholarship, law and poetry; and the profound influences of French romance.

The early estimate of Caxton that he was an "illiterate man and of small judgment," has been met by more recent biographers (Knight, Le Roux de Lincy, Blades, and Duff) with the rebuttal that he translated from three languages—French, Latin, and Dutch—with a high degree of excellence, "an astonishingly large body of literature, much of which has proved of the greatest value even today."

THOMAS WALSH.

Everyman's Library (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company) includes in recent editions two volumes of biography that will be welcomed by every student of English letters. Mr. Hadley's selection from the Letters of William Cowper groups the most interesting among the epistles of a charming man. The same editor's Horace Walpole's Letters offers in an excellent, low-priced form the comment of a brilliant statesman and romantic author upon events and persons of the day. Other volumes are: Memoirs of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, a famous emancipator; Peaks, Passes and Glaciers, a selection, well edited by E. H. Blakeney, of essays dealing with important and thrilling explorations; Jules Verne's two absorbing romances, Five Weeks in a Balloon and Around the World in Eighty Days, bound together in one neat volume; and Charles Kingsley's Madam How and Lady Why, a series of lessons on natural history for the benefit of children. The price of each volume is now eighty cents. One cannot praise too highly the service rendered by Everyman's Library in placing good books, not easily obtainable elsewhere, at the disposal of all.

The novels of Leonard Merrick in the uniform edition published by E. P. Dutton and Company, will undoubtedly appeal to the large number of readers who have enjoyed the work of this master craftsman. Perhaps no other novelist of our time has been so highly praised by his fellows. The series of introductions which accompany the present issue shower praise over most illustrious signatures. W. J. Locke, for instance, professes to see in the book entrusted to him "everywhere the firmness of outline which comes only by conviction of truth, and the light and shade which is only attained by a man who loves his craft." This conviction must have been shared by the publishers. They have done everything to make these exceptionally well-printed and attractively bound volumes worthy of their status as a "definitive" edition. At the price—$2.50 each—the novels of Leonard Merrick are, in their present format, a very good literary investment.

Gemma Caelestis: Breviary Hymns in Honor of Saint Benedict, edited by Reverend Matthew Britt, O. S. B. Beatty, Pennsylvania: The Archabbey Press.

THE purpose of this little book, as the editor declares, is to popularize the liturgical hymns in honor of Saint Benedict. The eleven selections include hymns as ancient as those of Saint Damian (1007-1072) and Peter the Venerable of Cluny (1072-1156). The English versions have been made by such fine stylists as Alan McDougall and Father Caswall, ensuring the high standard and literary quality of the collection as a whole.

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THE QUIET CORNER

I counsel thee, shut not thy heart nor thy library.—C. LAMB.

"What," demanded Dr. Angelicus of Euphemia, "are you reading so intently?"

"A fascinating one-page advertisement in the New York Times entitled Good News for Homely Girls," replied Euphemia seriously. "Would you like to hear it?"

Britannicus, bent over his desk, stirred restlessly.

"No news is good news," he remarked. "We'll take it that way, if you don't mind."

"In other words, you're not interested in homely girls, even though you should be," said Euphemia accusingly.

"Am I exceptional?" inquired Britannicus mildly.

"Not at all," said the Doctor. "As for me, I suppose my appreciation of current feminine beauty has been somewhat dulled by an over-reading of the classes. My raptures are all induced by famous beauties long since removed from this world."

"I agree," said Britannicus. "It is easy for the scholar to recognize that real feminine beauty has completely passed from the scene. The only dream of fair women that I will permit myself is entirely inspired by literature, history, and tradition."

"I see; safety first," remarked Euphemia.

"Not at all," said the Doctor. "You don't understand. How, for instance, can one be anything but bored looking at a modern Follies beauty, when he recalls the magical perfection of the face of Cleopatra, or Helen of Troy, as they stand out from the pages of classical and historical literature?"

"Indeed!" sniffed Euphemia. "Well, just listen to what this advertisement says. It first asks: 'How big was Cleopatra's nose?' And then replies: 'Cleopatra's nose was much too big.'"

"Outrageous and libelous!" exclaimed the Doctor. "I'm sure her nose was perfectly proportioned."

"Oh, don't you believe the advertisements, Doctor?" asked Euphemia.

The Doctor merely glowered.

"This one," went on Euphemia, "says that even though her nose was much too big, that 'that didn't keep her from completely fascinating Julius Caesar and Mark Antony.'"

"The fall of the mark was even worse in those days than it was right after the war," admitted Britannicus.

"I wonder if Cleopatra's nose was any bigger than mine," said Euphemia reflectively, as she made a gesture toward her pocket-book mirror.

"Impossible," exclaimed Angelicus hastily. "Er— I beg your pardon," he apologized as Euphemia bridled. "What I meant to say was that it is entirely improbable that Cleopatra's nose was not of a perfect size. She and Helen of Troy —"

"Helen of Troy!" interrupted Euphemia. "Just listen to what the advertisement says of her: 'The chances are good that the face that launched a thousand ships had freckles!'"

"Now this is all preposterous," strongly objected the Doctor.

"Probably one freckle for every ship," went on Euphemia. "By the way, I wonder if there is such a thing as freckle-inducing cream."

"If there is, I forbid you to use it," exclaimed Britannicus. "Remember, I have to look at you every day in this library."

"All right," agreed Euphemia amiably. "Shipping is rather dead just now, anyway."

"Will you tell me," asked Angelicus in irritation, "what this nonsensical advertisement is all about?"

"Well," explained Euphemia, referring again to her paper,

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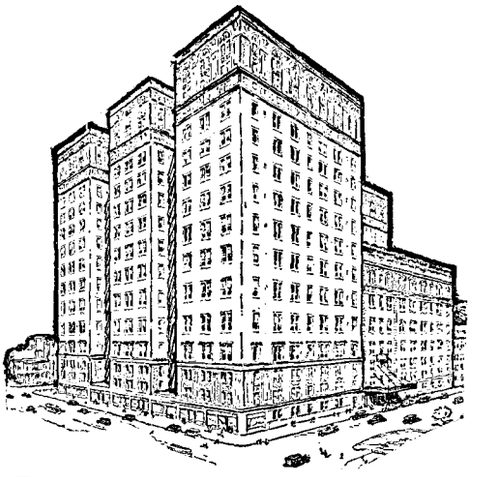

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"right after the caption, Good News for Homely Girls, it says: 'Quite obviously, gentle reader, this was not written for your lovely eyes to read—' "

"Why 'obviously'?" interrupted Britannicus.

"Sir?" demanded Euphemia.

"I mean," explained Britannicus literally, "that the person who wrote it, couldn't see you."

"That's because he never saw me," said Euphemia enigmatically. "However, to go on. It says that 'girls do not win by looks alone—they never have—they never will. Some of the world's greatest fascinators were anything but easy to look at—in the cold light of history—at a safe distance from the magic of their eyes. Of course, they all had something! Something better, more subtle, more fascinating than mere good looks. What was it? Ah, there's the question! Wasn't it, isn't it, won't it always be—while men are men and women are women—that enticing, bewildering thing called feminine charm? A thing that is born in every daughter of Eve who has the brains to use it. If you will only make the most of what you have, it's enough—and more than enough. Just wishing will never do it. If you really want to win admiration and leadership among women—you must earn it!' "

"And how," demanded Britannicus, "can one earn it?"

"Subscribe to a certain women's magazine," announced Euphemia, "for the advertisement proclaims that 'its readers are other women's leaders. I'd like to be as charming as Cleopatra, and I'm going to send my subscription in right away."

"Stuff and nonsense," proclaimed the Doctor. "Euphemia, I am out of patience with you—wasting your time reading such advertisements. Now here is a volume of Homer —"

" 'Other women's leaders,' " interrupted Britannicus. "But in this contest of feminine charm, that's not sufficient. You would also have to subscribe to another magazine that would make you become men's leaders—and to become their leaders, it would have to teach you to understand them thoroughly."

"That's true," said Euphemia, interestedly. "Now which magazine would you suggest to give me a real understanding of men?"

"The American Boy," snapped Angelicus in disgust, as he made for the door.

—THE LIBRARIAN.

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